

# Harry and His New Family

by grugster

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

## Chapter 1 - On the Train

Chapter 1 of 32

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 1 - On the Train

Harry leaned his head against the cool glass of the window beside him as the train jerked out of the station. His mouth was turned down in a frown and his eyelids were heavy and drooping.

For a second his eyes closed, and all he could see were the cold, red eyes of the monster Voldemort had become. Then the twisted cruel smirk as he raised his wand.

Harry's eyes snapped open again, his heart beating fast in his chest. *Don't think about it*, he told himself firmly. He'd been fighting off the memories of his second year with more or less success all summer.

*That's one thing Uncle Vernon's good for*, he thought bitterly. *At least when I was beaten into unconsciousness, I didn't have any nightmares of the battle.*

Involuntarily, his mind went back to the chaos that had raged inside the castle when the Dark Lord attacked *Merlin, we were only second-years!*

A lump still caught in his throat when he remembered.

They had done everything they could. The Headmaster, and Professor Snape, had stepped in to his rescue, coming together to form one final, hopeless stand against Voldemort.

"So, you show your true colors at last, traitor!" He remembered the snake-like voice of Voldemort just before he cast a vicious Cruciatius Curse at the Potions master.

Harry shifted in his seat, rolling his forehead across the glass and staring out at the rolling hills in an attempt to tear his mind off the path it was taking. It was a futile effort. Now that the memories had started, they wouldn't stop flowing through his mind.

Snape had jerked under the curse on the ground. Harry had been shocked. Ron and Hermione had been at his side, also not able to move, when Harry caught a movement out of the corner of his eye.

Beside Hermione, Nagini, Voldemort's poisonous giant snake, had been hovering, ready to strike.

"Hermione!" he'd shouted and pushed her out of the way. He still wasn't sure what spell he'd used, but the snake had released an almost human shriek as it was blasted off Hermione, its body falling lifeless on the forest floor.

"Harry Potter, you damn boy." The voice, cold and cruel, had raised the hairs on the back of his neck.

Voldemort's red eyes had flickered between Harry and his snake and narrowed dangerously. "What have you done?" he'd hissed...as Harry's scar burned with the force of the wizard's anger.

Harry had moved in front of Hermione, who was still lying on the ground with Ron kneeling next to her. *Merlin, please let them survive all of this. Don't let them die because of me.*

"Take her, Ron, and run," he'd ordered his friend. His gaze still fixed on Voldemort, he could hear that Ron had done what he had told him. Out of the corner of his eye, he had seen them hiding behind a tree.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" The dark wizard had shouted, taking advantage of Harry's diverted attention, a green light bursting from the tip of his wand.

Harry had lurched out of the way, rolling on the ground.

A second "*Avada Kedavra!*" echoed the first half a second later, and Harry's eyes had turned, wide with confusion and terror, to land on Professors Dumbledore and Snape, both with wands extended in Voldemort's direction.

A shriek had cut through the air, and Harry's head had twisted around, mouth gaping open, to see Voldemort collapsed on his knees. The wizard's angry red eye had fixed on him one last time as he fell forward...

For a long moment none of them had moved, disbelief heavy in the air. Could it really be over? Just like that?

"Is...is he dead?" Ron's voice had cracked with emotion as he asked the question; it seemed to break the spell that had rooted them in place.

Professor Snape had still looked very shaken from the Cruciatus Curse.

"Severus?" Professor Dumbledore had questioned.

Harry had glanced up as the dark-haired wizard pulled up his left sleeve, revealing an unmarked forearm.

"He's... really gone." Snape's voice had held a quiet sort of shock that made him seem more human than Harry had ever seen him before.

And then it had clicked. "Nagini."

The two wizards had looked at Harry.

"What was that?" Dumbledore had asked.

"The snake." Harry had pointed to the serpent's corpse. "It...it must have been the final Horcrux."

There had been a great party to celebrate the victory. Everyone had congratulated him. Professor Snape had even patted his shoulder and said he was proud of him. Snape had changed somewhat, as he didn't have to pretend any longer that he was one of Voldemort's henchmen. He still wasn't exactly kind and loving, but he tried to treat all of his students equally. His Slytherins needed him now more than ever. Those who hadn't helped the Dark Lord during the attack were scared that they would have to suffer for their peers who joined Voldemort, though the teachers did their best to prevent prejudices and ridicule towards the Slytherins. Many had lost their parents and needed emotional support. Snape had a lot to do, being the Head of Slytherin House. It was obvious that he really cared for their well-being even if he wouldn't openly admit it. He still was very strict and proud, but not unfair anymore.

The teachers had worked hard to find people that would adopt those who had lost their parents and relatives in the attack or because they were sent to Azkaban.

Bitterly, Harry thought, *Yeah, they worked so hard to make them happy and find them new families, but what about me? I had to go back to the damn Dursleys. I couldn't even leave for a few weeks to the Burrow because the Weasleys were visiting Charlie in Romania.* He'd had to spend the whole holiday at the Dursleys, and it had been much worse than the last time. Uncle Vernon had beaten him whenever he found a little reason for it, and when he hadn't found one, he just made one up. *I'm positive he enjoys beating me immensely, the sadistic bastard.* The worst were the days when he had beaten him with his belt, and that had happened several times this summer. Just thinking of it made his back hurt. He still had wounds from the beatings there; some were still very fresh. His ribs hurt because of the kicks Uncle Vernon had given him. They had hardly fed him; his face was pale and sunken. Large bags had formed under his eyes. But he had worked hard to learn Glamour Charms and could now use them very effectively.

The only drawbacks of Glamour Charms were that they took a lot of energy and holding them up all the time was very tiring. He hoped that after a few days of proper food and sleep he wouldn't have to wear them any longer. *At least the holidays are over now and I can go back to school!* Harry thought, relieved.

"Everything okay, Harry?" Ron interrupted his thoughts.

"Yeah, sure!" Harry answered. Ron and Hermione eyed him in concern.

"Was your summer that bad, Harry?" Hermione asked worriedly.

"No, no, just the usual," he lied and tried to smile at them. *Come on, compose yourself. The summer is over and it's almost a year until I have to go back!* he thought. *I don't want to speak about the Dursleys and what happened this summer. What would it help?*

"Look, Harry, that's me with one of the baby dragons from Charlie's work. Isn't that cool?" Ron handed him a photograph. Happy about the distraction, he took it and had a closer look.

"Wicked," Harry said, admiring.

Out of his the corner of his eye he could see Hermione still eying him closely in concern. But it seemed she would let the topic rest. For now at least.

The train ride went smoothly without any disturbances or problems.

When they arrived at Hogsmeade, Harry looked for Hagrid. The giant was easy to spot and was already on his way over to Harry.

"Harry! Good ter see yeh." When Hagrid embraced him in a bear hug, Harry winced in pain as he felt some of the welts on his back break open again. But as anyone

would wince when Hagrid hugged him, nobody found it unusual.

Harry bit on his lower lip to stop himself from crying out and pressed his face into Hagrid's coat so that nobody could see his face pulled in pain. Harry couldn't speak from the pain in his torso and back. But Hagrid was so excited that he didn't notice Harry's lack of response.

"Harry, I'm glad yer back. My little hero, eh?" He released Harry and ruffled his hair affectionately. "I have lotsa new things I want ter show yeh. Yeh have ter come down ter my hut some time soon ter see. Promise?"

"Sure, Hagrid." Harry nodded and was glad that he found his voice again.

"Hagrid you must call for the first years. They are already running around confused." Hermione warned Hagrid.

"Bugger, I totally forgot! See yeh all later!" With that, he moved away from them and shouted, "First years, over 'ere!"

The trio made their way to the carriages. There they met Neville. Everyone was greeting each other happily because they were so glad to be together again. When Harry looked around, he could see Ginny with Lee Jordan at another carriage. They were waving in Harry's direction and he waved back. The Weasley twins were nowhere to be seen. He was disappointed that they didn't come to meet him on the train. Over the summer they had written to him even more than Ron and Hermione. After Voldemort's defeat they had found out about the Room of Requirement. Harry had joined them with their experiments for their jokes and fireworks. He had been glad to be away from all the celebrating and cheerful people; he hadn't liked the attention. He didn't like it when people saw him as a hero.

*I only killed a damn snake*, he thought, annoyed. The twins never treated him differently. That was something he was really glad about. With them he could just be Harry. While working together with them, he found out that he really liked brewing potions. Without the fear of Snape breathing down his neck, he enjoyed it. And when Snape didn't act any longer as if he hated him, he became even better in Potions.

Over the summer Harry exchanged letters with the twins about new ideas for new jokes and fireworks or about how to improve their already invented ones. He was looking forward to realizing his ideas in the Room of Requirement. Reading the letters and researching for improvements were the only good parts of his holiday. That was what he had been looking forward to each day. Now seeing that they didn't come to greet him was really disappointing.

"She is together with him, can you believe that? He is three years older than her!" Ron said angrily.

"Oh come on, Ron. Ginny can decide for herself with whom she falls in love," Hermione scolded him.

"In love? She saw him only once at the start of the holiday and then they were writing to each other almost every day. Errol was almost dying from flying from Romania to Lee so often. How can she be in love with him when she only saw him once?"

"They know each other from the last school year, Ron. God, don't be such a jerk." Hermione rolled her eyes.

It was good to have his two friends back. He enjoyed their little battles.

"Stop smirking, mate." Ron pushed Harry's shoulder mockingly.

"I just realized how much I missed you two," Harry said, still grinning.

"We missed you, too," Hermione said, smiling.

"Yeah, mate!" Ron responded friendlyly.

When the castle came into sight, Harry was overwhelmed by the feeling of returning home. Glad to have his friends around and not having to fear a beating by his uncle, he was looking forward to the new school year.

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 2 – No Sleep Found

*Chapter 2 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 2 – No Sleep Found

The Great Hall was full of students when the five friends arrived, all chatting happily; many greeted Harry and patted his shoulder. They met Dean and Seamus and sat down together.

Harry winced when two hands were placed on his shoulders; bad memories about his Uncle grabbing him from behind, shoving him in a corner to beat him came to mind.

"A little touchy today?" Fred asked.

"I just didn't hear you," Harry said. "Where have you been? I thought we would meet on the train."

"Sorry, Harry. We were working on something new, you know?" George leaned closer. "Nothing that our little brother should know about," he whispered into Harry's ear.

"Come on, Fred. Dumbledore is already looking around. I'm sure he will start his little speech soon." With that George dragged his brother off with him. Over his shoulder he shouted to Harry, "We'll see you later."

Slowly all the students were seated at their tables, and Harry looked at the high table where the teachers sat. The curse on the DADA class was obviously broken because Professor Moody was sitting amongst the teachers, and Professor Lupin was smiling in Harry's direction as he nodded his head at him. Professor Lupin and Professor Moody had taken over the DADA class the year before when Lockhart ran away to avoid the battle. Harry wished they had come earlier because they were much better teachers compared to the spineless Lockhart. They complemented one another perfectly. Lupin always calm and understanding while Moody made sure that everyone took the class as seriously as they should.

Remus was not only a teacher to Harry; he was a good friend of his parents and now of Harry's as well. But with the battle and all of the celebrating, Harry hadn't much time to speak with him.

Harry grinned and waved back to his greeting. Then his gaze fell on Professor Dumbledore, who calmly looked out at the student body. Next to him sat Professor Snape, who was occupied with his wife at the moment. Professor Dumbledore-Snape sat on his other side, smiling warmly about something Professor Snape must have just said to her. *They both looked very happy and relaxed. They must have enjoyed their first holiday without spying on the Dark Lord* Harry thought.

It became more and more obvious to Harry that almost everyone was much more cheerful this year, except for himself.

*Come on, you're back at school. Start being happy like everyone else,* Harry ordered himself. But the heavy feeling in his chest didn't vanish. Harry sighed. *I wonder if I'll ever be happy again.*

When Dumbledore stood up the hall went silent. His normal greeting speech was spiked with happy comments about the new happiness and the victorious defeat of the Dark Lord. Like he'd done at the end of their last year, he again ordered the students to support those who had lost someone in the war, no matter which side they had been on.

Professor McGonagall then led the first years into the hall. They were sorted into the four houses, and the delicious food appeared and everyone dug in.

Harry was overwhelmed by the amount of food. His stomach rumbled in pleasant anticipation, and he ate as much as he could. To his surprise, that wasn't much. Shortly after he started to eat, his stomach ached, and he had to stop eating.

"What's wrong, Harry? Aren't you hungry?" Hermione asked worriedly as he pushed away his plate, still piled with food.

"Not really. I'm tired from the trip, I guess. I think I'll leave for the dormitory and lie down," he stated, standing up. The Glamour Charm was weakening him, and he was very tired.

He left the hall without a backward glance and missed the suspicious glances aimed at him from Professor Snape and his wife.

A shower was still necessary because Uncle Vernon only allowed him one shower a week, and he was starting to smell again. Even with nobody else in the room, he didn't dare let his Glamour Charm down. He feared someone could walk in on him and see his wounds. When he had finished his shower, he lay down in his bed, exhausted.

*Damn, when I go to sleep the charm will wear off.* So he stood up again and drew the curtains around his bed *I hope Ron won't try to look in.*

Even though he was tired, Harry couldn't sleep. The others came in shortly after he went to bed and were happily chatting.

"Harry? Harry? Are you still awake?" He could hear Ron's voice through his curtains. But Harry didn't answer.

He didn't feel like talking. The heavy feeling in his chest increased, and he just wanted to be alone. He had the feeling that everyone around him was happy and he was the only one who couldn't be.

His thoughts wandered to Uncle Vernon and the cold and uncaring behaviour of his aunt over the whole summer. She wasn't interested in what Vernon did to him *She was only worried I'd spoil her furniture or carpet by bleeding.* Harry thought bitterly.

Dudley had made himself scarce. Maybe he thought what they did to Harry wasn't right, but he wasn't strong enough to tell his parents. More than once Harry had thought Dudley looked guilty or ashamed when Vernon beat him or locked him in his cupboard without dinner. Sometimes he'd found a bar of chocolate pushed under the door when Vernon had him locked away for longer than usual. Dudley had never admitted to doing so, but who else could it have been?

Harry rolled from one side to the other. *Why can't I sleep? This is ridiculous. Now, when I have the time and feel safe enough to sleep, I can't fall asleep.* Harry thought angrily. *That's not fair.*

Nothing he tried worked. He only slept for about two hours that night and got up around five o'clock. All the other students were still sleeping, so he had the bathroom to himself again. After checking three times that nobody would walk in on him in the bathroom, he let the Glamour Charm down to examine his face.

*I look horrible. If I don't get some sleep soon, I might not be able to hold up the Glamour Charm any longer.* He splashed cold water on his face and enjoyed the refreshing feeling. But, unable to push off his feelings of paranoia anymore, he put up the charm again, afraid someone would walk in and see him.

After brushing his teeth and making himself fresh, he decided to just sit in the common room and wait for the others to wake up.

Harry stared into the fireplace. *I thought I would be happy the moment I boarded the Hogwarts Express or at least when I met my friends. But now I'm here and I just can't be happy. I get sadder and sadder when I see all the happy and cheerful people around me.*

With his elbows on his knees, he rested his head in his hands *Hermione is already suspicious. How can I avoid letting them all realize that I'm a damn freak who lets his uncle beat him, not a hero.*

When the first Gryffindors came down to the common room, Harry went up to his dormitory again.

"Wow, you're up already?" Ron asked sleepily, still in his bed.

"Yeah, maybe because I went to bed early. You should get ready so we can go down for breakfast."

Ron swung his long legs over the bedside and mockingly said, "Yes, mother!"

# Chapter 3 – The Confrontation

Chapter 3 of 32

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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## Chapter 3 The Confrontation

They met Hermione in the common room and headed to the Great Hall together for breakfast.

Again Harry couldn't eat as much as he would have liked. It felt as if his stomach had shrunk over the summer.

Hermione was watching him out of the corner of her eye.

After asking him many times if he was okay she was obviously losing her patience.

*I hope she doesn't plan to speak with Professor McGonagall over my eating problems* Harry thought, worried.

His musing was interrupted by Professor McGonagall approaching the Gryffindor table. She handed out the new time tables. When she gave Harry his time table, she eyed him closely. Harry couldn't hold her searching gaze and lowered his eyes. He was very glad when he could see her walk away out of the corner of his eye.

When he checked his schedule, he groaned. "Double Potions with the Slytherins first subject today. Couldn't it be Magical Creatures?"

"Oh, come on, Harry. Don't you remember that Professor Snape doesn't single you out anymore? You even seemed to start liking Potions a lot at the end of last year," Hermione reminded him.

"Yes, but he's still not the person I would like to see right now." *And I don't want to brew anything right now when I can hardly concentrate from the lack of sleep and food lately. Snape will realize it for sure and then what shall I say?* Harry thought, scared. "I hoped to see Hagrid as soon as possible." It was a lie, but Harry hoped that Hermione and Ron would buy it because they knew how much Harry liked Hagrid.

It seemed to work because none of them pressed the issue further.

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Harry was trying hard to concentrate on his potion. *God, I'm so tired and just want to sleep*, he thought while cutting the ingredients for his potion. Several times Snape, while passing his cauldron, paused for a moment. That made Harry very nervous and his hands shook. *I hope he didn't notice it*, he thought worriedly.

With some help from Hermione he finished his potion in time. He packed his things and already was turning to leave when Snape's voice made him freeze. "Mr. Potter, a word, please. Miss Granger, give this pass to your next teacher to excuse Mr. Potter."

Hermione took the letter from the professor and left. When she passed Harry she gave him a worried look.

Ron felt he had to lighten Harry up. "At least he can't hand you over to Voldemort. Maybe only a little bit of cauldron cleaning and then we will see you again."

"I heard that, Mr. Weasley, and if you don't want to break the record of your twin brothers in getting a detention in your very first class you ought to leave right now." The dangerous voice of Professor Snape came directly from behind Ron.

Ron jumped startled and turned in Snape's direction. "Sorry, sir," he apologized quickly and almost ran from the room.

Now Harry and Snape were alone in the classroom. Snape was eyeing him, and Harry had the feeling he could see right through him. When the professor didn't make a move to speak, Harry became even more nervous.

When the tension became unbearable, Harry anxiously looked up into Snape's face and asked, "Professor?"

"Follow me!" With that Snape was striding to the door. Harry was shocked. He thought Snape would question him about his lack of concentration or about the tremor in his hands, but he didn't think that he would want to take him somewhere. *Oh, Merlin, please not to Dumbledore! Or McGonagall. She was already looking at me suspiciously this morning.*

"Potter, I'm waiting." Snape was standing in the door frame.

"Where are we going, Professor?" Harry asked while trying to catch up with Snape, who already had started to walk again.

"I said follow me, Potter, not ask me questions."

Harry started having problems with his breathing while trying to keep up with Snape.

When Severus noticed that Harry was having problems following, he slowed down. But he still tried to go fast so that Harry would be too occupied with keeping his pace to realize where they were heading. His plan worked until they rounded the final corner and the heavy door of the hospital wing was visible.

Severus had already slowed down so that he was beside Harry when Harry realized where they were.

He stopped abruptly and looked in panic at his professor. "Professor Snape, why are we here?" He still had the slight hope that Snape just wanted to get some potion vials or so from Madam Pomfrey or wanted to speak with her about something which didn't concern him. But deep inside he knew that his cover had been blown.

"We are here because you obviously think your teachers are morons, Mr. Potter. You hardly ate anything the last two meals, and it is clear under your pathetic Glamour Charm that you are totally exhausted. Did you really think you could fool us?"

Panic was all Harry could feel. His heart beat fast, sweat was forming on his forehead, and he started to back away from Snape.

But Snape was faster and grabbed Harry's arm. He pulled Harry so near that their noses almost touched. "You will listen now, Harry."

*Oh, God, he called me by my first name,* Harry realized.

"I don't know what happened, but I will not wait until you break down because you are too proud to tell anyone what your problem is. You will let Madam Pomfrey check you thoroughly now."

"No, Professor, please. There isn't anything wrong with me. Please let me go," Harry pleaded and tried to wriggle out of Snape's grip, but Severus didn't let go.

"Harry, I can drag you through this door and tie you to the examination table, or you could freely walk through this door and retain your dignity."

"No, Professor, you don't understand." Harry tried with all his power to free himself now, but Severus was encircling him from behind and forced his arms to cross over his chest. He was stuck. The moment this happened Harry lost it. He started sobbing, "Please, Professor, I don't want her to see... I will get in trouble. Uncle Vernon will not allow me to come to Hogwarts anymore." Tears were running down his face.

Severus was shocked. That wasn't what he had assumed. He thought Harry had tried some stupid experiment with the twins. But Harry's reaction made clear that something more serious was going on. "Shh, Harry, calm down. Whatever it is, Madam Pomfrey will help you. You don't have to be embarrassed."

"Please, sir, Hogwarts is everything I have. Please, I don't want to lose it!" Harry sobbed out of control. Something about being held like this was letting him feel safe. Maybe Snape would help him. He tried to turn a little bit to the side to lean his head against Snape's chest. Severus felt what Harry needed and let him turn. Harry buried his face in the professor's chest and slowly calmed down when Severus' arms encircled him again.

"What happened, Harry?" He already could imagine what this was all about but he had to hear it from Harry.

"I can't, sir. Please, don't force me to speak about it." Harry hands clutched the front of Severus' robes desperately.

"It's okay. I won't force you to speak about it, but we have to let Poppy check up on you, Harry." When he felt Harry starting to protest, he stopped him. "No, Harry, there is no way around it." He grabbed Harry's shoulders and held his sobbing form a little away from him to look into his face. "If you wish, I will stay with you but you will let Poppy examine you. You are tired and obviously injured. There is no way around it." He wiped the tears from Harry's face.

It felt good to have Snape here. It was as if a weight had been taken from him the moment Snape was there and realized that something wasn't right. He wanted him to stay and never leave him alone again.

Snape didn't wait for another reaction from Harry. The boy had calmed down as much as possible given the situation, and so he just led him by his shoulder to the hospital wing. Harry followed his lead a little reluctantly. Only when Snape opened the door did he have to hold Harry's arm and guide him more forcefully into the infirmary.

## Chapter 4 – Meeting Madam Pomfrey

*Chapter 4 of 32*

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### Chapter 4 – Meeting Madam Pomfrey

They had hardly set foot in the infirmary when Madam Pomfrey came striding quickly in their direction. "What happened, Severus? A Potions accident?"

She came to an abrupt halt when she saw Harry trying to back away, hiding behind Severus. That was odd.

"No, Poppy, it wasn't a Potions accident." He restrained Harry from backing away and led him over to one of the beds. Poppy followed them, her mind already racing to find the possible causes for Harry's odd reaction.

"Sit down here, Harry." He motioned to Harry to the bed and then turned to Poppy.

"I want you to check Mr. Potter fully for any illnesses or injuries." He pronounced the last word in a way that made Poppy realize that was why they were here. A glance in the scared and wet face of Harry made it clear that he wasn't here by his free will.

"Okay, Harry, just relax and let me cast a few diagnostic spells first."

Harry's breath was quick and his gaze was frantically flickering between Severus and Poppy. It even lingered for a short time on the door until Severus shifted so that he was blocking Harry's view.

Poppy already had performed the diagnostic spells and was now looking at Professor Snape. "Perhaps you should leave us alone, Severus?"

"NO!" Harry shouted in panic. "You promised, Professor." Harry jumped up from the bed.

Poppy was taken aback by this reaction and was frozen in shock. But Severus was fast and grabbed Harry by the shoulder. "Back on the bed, Harry," he ordered and shoved him back in the direction of the bed.

"But you can't leave me alone here, Professor. Please!" Harry begged as he tried to wriggle out of Severus' grasp, with no success.

"I'm not going anywhere, Harry! I will uphold my promise, and you will get back on this bed. Now!" he said sternly.

Harry reluctantly obeyed and jumped on the bed again.

Poppy had recovered from the shock and was her professional self again.

"Harry, I have to examine you closer now. For that, you have to remove your shirt."

Harry immediately clutched the hem of his shirt and pulled it even further down. "No, you already scanned me with your wand. Just give me something for the wounds and heal my ribs, so that I can breathe better." Out of his eye he could see Snape breathe in sharply and move closer.

*So, he didn't know how much I was in pain. Fantastic, now my chances of leaving the hospital wing are practically zero.* Harry thought sadly. *But I don't want them to see it. I'm just a weak freak. They will expel me from Hogwarts.*

Harry started to panic again. He frantically looked for an escape route, but Professor Snape must have predicted that and had moved so close that he couldn't jump from the bed. There was only one way left. With one swift movement, he leaned back, swung his legs over the bed and jumped down on the other side. That was as far as he got until Snape shouted, "*Petrificus Totalus.*" And with that, he was paralyzed.

"Severus, no!" Poppy shouted, but it was too late. "Don't use magic on him! He's too worn out."

She moved around the bed and gently placed Harry's still form, with Severus' help, on the bed again. She then placed a spell on the bed, which would prevent Harry from leaving it.

When this was all done, she removed Severus' freezing spell from Harry.

The moment he was released, Harry tried again to jump from the bed, but realized that he couldn't move over the side of the bed. He could still swing his legs over the side, but couldn't jump down. He gave Madam Pomfrey a shocked look and moved back against the headboard, pulled his legs to his body and encircled them with his arms.

"I don't want to remove my shirt. Just give me a healing salve."

"No, Harry. I cannot just give you a healing salve. I need to see how much you are hurt and how deep the wounds are. You are also underweight and magically drained. There is nothing to be embarrassed about Harry." Poppy tried to calm him.

Harry tried to back away even further, only the headboard against his back prevented it. "No, please!" He buried his head between his knees and his chest.

He could hear Poppy sigh and turn to Severus. "I think we should call for help from St. Mungo's."

"NO!" Harry was kneeling on the bed now. "Don't send me away! I don't want to go to a hospital!" He started crying again. Angry by his own reaction, he forcefully wiped his sleeve over his tears.

"Harry, we are not sending you away or placing you in a hospital," Severus said while sitting on the bed in hope to calm Harry with his presence. Poppy was already moving to the fireplace to call for help because she knew that they couldn't do this alone.

"No, Professor. Please, stop her. They will take me with them. I know it," Harry pleaded when he saw Poppy's head disappear in the fireplace. He tried to stand up, but Severus had seized his underarm and was pulling him nearer to himself.

"Harry, calm down. It's not the first time we've asked for a special healer from St. Mungo's to help us. They are very kind and very talented. I have a few friends amongst them. They will just help us to examine you and speak with you. They won't take you with them."

"Promise?" Harry felt like a small boy to ask this, but he needed it to feel secure.

"I promise!" Severus said honestly.

Harry stopped struggling and seemed to calm down. Severus sighed in relief.

That lasted only a short time until Harry saw that Poppy hadn't come back alone. He tried to wriggle free again. Seeing the cause of Harry's struggle, Severus let go of Harry and stood up from the bed.

Harry immediately hid his face between his knees and chest and pressed his back against the headboard as hard as possible.

## Chapter 5 – The Examination, Part One

*Chapter 5 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Like I promised this chapter is much longer than the last one. I hope you will like it and review!*

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and Budgie, for correcting my mistakes.*

*Disclaimer: All recognizable characters belong to J.K. Rowling, and I am not earning anything by writing this story.*

*I'm not a native speaker of English!*

### Chapter 5 The Examination, Part One

Poppy informed Healer James Smith about the results of her diagnostic spell and Harry's reaction when she wanted to examine him closer. The Healer immediately packed his bag and came over to see his new patient.

When he approached the bed, he found Severus speaking softly to the boy. It seemed to be calming him. James knew him well; he'd become good friends with the whole

Dumbledore-Snape family during the time he'd spent working with the other man. He'd first met Severus when he'd helped Healer Pearce heal him after a meeting with the Dark Lord. He'd also helped the Potions master work through the emotional wounds Voldemort had inflicted while he was in his service.

"Hello, Severus!" He greeted his friend when he came over to him. The boy hid himself behind his knees at his voice.

"Hello, James! I'm glad that you had time to come. Did Poppy give you all the information you needed?"

"Not all I need," the Healer said while taking the place Severus had occupied a few minutes before. He observed his patient, who didn't dare to look up to see who was sitting on his bed. "I take it he didn't come to you?" he asked Severus.

"No, I already had a close eye on him because he didn't eat much during the feast yesterday and left it very early. Then this morning he hardly ate anything again. His first class was mine, so I finally got a closer look and saw that he was wearing a Glamour Charm. He was unfocused, his hands shook, he was sweating and obviously extremely tired, so I confronted him about it, but he refused to tell me what was wrong with him."

That caused a movement from the other end of the bed like he had hoped it would. "You didn't ask me. You just tricked me into coming here." Harry looked reproachfully at Severus.

"Oh, so you would have spoken with your Professor if he had asked you?" Healer Smith was now addressing Harry.

With shock Harry realized that he had moved from his hiding place behind his knees and was now looking at the Healer. He was a kind-looking man of maybe 45 years.

"No! But he didn't even try. He tricked me." Harry felt more and more like a child, but he didn't care at the moment.

"And why do you think he tricked you, eh? What is your name by the way?" the Healer asked innocently.

"Harry. Just Harry!" he glared at Severus as if to dare him to tell his last name. Even though the chance was very low, he hoped that the Healer didn't know who he was. *My picture was in all the newspapers; what's the chance that he doesn't know me, unless he's been living under a rock* Harry thought sarcastically.

"I'm Healer James Smith. But you can just call me James if you want." Healer Smith offered his hand for Harry to shake it.

Harry eyed the hand sceptically. The man was nice, and he had the same first name as his dead dad, but could he trust him?

"I have heard about Healers like you," Harry said without taking the offered hand.

James let his hand sink again. "And what did you hear that makes you afraid to greet me?"

Harry stared at the hand that now innocently rested on the bed. "You can read people with your hands. You can not only feel all their illnesses and wounds through it, but also their feelings."

James smiled warmly. "So you fear that when you shake my hand, I could read that you are very scared of being examined and that I'll take you with me into the clinic or contact your relatives, that I'll realize you are embarrassed that I see what's under your shirt, and that I will hurt you with my treatment?"

Harry's mouth fell open as James talked. He was shocked. "Butbutyou need skin contact to read someone," Harry stuttered.

"Yes, I do need skin contact to magically scan someone! But I didn't need it to read your thoughts; they're written all over your face, Harry," James said, relaxed and with a warm voice. "But you don't have to fear this at all. I just want to check if you need something other than a healing salve. I will have to examine you head to toe. I know that is a little awkward, but I can assure you that I have done this hundreds of times. For example, I've done it several times on your Potions master. I'm sure there is nothing that can shock me about you. This hospital wing is well supplied, so there will also be no need to move you from here to the clinic. I will also try to be as gentle as possible and not hurt you, but of course I can't promise it because I don't know how badly you are hurt and what treatments I will have to do, but I do promise to warn you before I do something that could hurt. And before you tell us who has caused your wounds... I won't inform anyone, okay?"

Harry's gaze moved between the Healer and Severus several times. You could almost hear his mind working.

"He is one of the best Healers I know, Harry. You can trust him," Severus said encouragingly.

Harry swallowed and then nodded his head.

"Okay, so I'll try again. Hello, Harry, I'm James."

This time Harry took the offered hand. His grip was reluctant, but he took it. He waited anxiously for the crazy tickle that he had read about happening when Healers examine their patients, but nothing happened. It was just the same as greeting a 'normal' person.

When James let go of his hand, Harry even looked stupidly at his hand for a few seconds.

"What are you waiting for?" James asked, smiling.

"A tickle. I read about it, and my friend Hermione also said it would tickle. She had a Healer examine her when she had Dragon Pox last year."

"It will tickle when I read you, but not when I just touch you. My wife wouldn't be happy if it was the other way around, would she?"

Harry even had to smile about that. James was very kind.

Harry had finally calmed down.

"So, just Harry, you didn't answer my first question. Why do you think Professor Snape tricked you?"

Harry looked at Severus, who was half sitting on the bed next to Harry's. "I think he knew that I wouldn't come with him on my own, and so he didn't even try to ask me first."

"And why was he interested at all?" James had moved from the bed and started to place some instruments on a small table, but he looked at Harry several times to show that he was still listening.

Again, Harry's eyes wandered to his professor. "I don't know."

"Severus?" James asked in Severus's direction.

"What?" Severus was startled by this question. He didn't know that he would be involved in this discussion.

"Why did you care?" James asked innocently.

Severus frowned. "What do you mean why do I care? He is my student, I'm his professor. He is a child, I'm an adult. What kind of stupid question is that?"



James grinned.

Harry was touched by Severus's words. *He cares*, he thought happily. *Finally someone cares.*

Seeing the emotions play on Harry's face, James knew he did the right thing to involve Severus. It seemed that the boy trusted him.

Severus himself wasn't glad to be involved at all. James was a good friend, but the man could still be so damn manipulative, which put Severus at a disadvantage. James had tricked him so many times into an examination or into speaking about things he just wanted to forget.

James had moved a high chair beside the instrument table and was now facing the empty space on the bed which he had occupied a few minutes before. "What do you think, Harry? Do you want to start?" James patted the empty spot in front of him to encourage Harry to come over.

*He is nice*, Harry started to reason with himself. *Until now, he didn't do anything against my will. Maybe I'd better let him examine me rather than Madam Pomfrey.*

But then Harry realized that the hospital door was still open, and anyone could come in. Again he started to panic and breathe fast.

Madam Pomfrey must have realized his gaze was focused on the door, because she started to close the curtain around Harry's bed. Severus had to leave his seat to stand near Harry.

When the curtains were closed, Harry moved slowly over to James.

"Just let your feet dangle over here," James said while helping Harry to move his legs over the edge. "Okay, so we first make it a little more comfortable for both of us." Saying that he removed Harry's left shoe.

Harry hadn't realized that he was still wearing his shoes and now looked apologetically at Madam Pomfrey.

Madam Pomfrey just smiled at him.

Quickly the other shoe followed, and James stood up from his chair and shoved it a little back to have more free space.

"I will now examine your head, Harry, okay?"

Harry looked anxiously on the instruments on the table.

"Just with my hands first," James said when he noticed Harry's glance. "I will scan your head for new and old injuries. That means I will use some Healer magic. So now the famous tickle will come. You just have to tell me if something hurts, okay?"

Harry nodded his head.

James felt the bone structure of Harry's head and lingered a few times at several spots to scan deeper.

Harry was a little startled when a sheet and a quill popped up in the air a few inches away from James. The quill moved over the sheet without James doing or saying anything, even though Harry was sure that it was noting down the results of the examination.

James stopped at the spot where Harry had hit his head hard at the beginning of the summer while Uncle Vernon had pushed him in a corner. His head had hurt several days afterwards, and he had felt dizzy. "Does this still give you problems, Harry?" James asked.

Harry could feel the tickle increase. "No." Harry tried the whole time to see James's hands. His eyes started to hurt because of the crazy angles they were forced into. *wish I had Professor Moody's magical eye*, Harry thought.

The quill moved again over the sheet.

When James reached his jaw, he asked, "I will let my finger stay here, and you try to move your lower jaw to each side, okay?"

Harry did as he was asked, but flinched in pain.

"Sorry," James said, and Harry could immediately feel a warm tingle in his jaw and a crazy sensation that made him relax and feel sleepy. Harry closed his eyes and even moaned a little in relief. The pain was washed away by it.

"Your jaw is inflamed. Maybe it was dislocated or sprained."

James patted Harry's head and said, "Okay, that was the first part."

Harry took a deep breath in relief, but quickly he remembered the instruments on the table and stiffened. He looked fearfully at the instrument table and wished James's hand away from it.

"So you've grown up in a Muggle household, right?"

*Fantastic. So much for having a chance that he doesn't know who I am*, Harry thought disappointedly.

Seeing that no reaction came from his patient, James went on. "How often have you seen a Muggle doctor?"

"Never?" Harry said.

"Was that a question or an answer, Harry?" James asked amusedly. He wasn't surprised that Harry had never been examined by a doctor. His fear of the instruments and the examination made it clear.

"No, I was never seen by a doctor. My aunt said 'what comes by itself leaves by itself'."

"So you don't know all these instruments, right?"

Harry shook his head and looked at the Healer with big, scared eyes.

James turned to address Poppy. "When was Severus's last check up, Poppy?"

Harry could see Severus stiffen. "What does that have to do with Harry's examination here, James?" Severus asked angrily because he already knew where this was leading.

"Way too long ago, I would say, James," was Poppy's reply. She was already moving in Severus's direction as he backed away.

"You cannot be serious, James," he tried to argue with the Healer.

"Something to hide?" James asked with amusement while Poppy lowered the headboard of the bed and shoved Severus to sit beside Harry. Then she summoned her own instruments.

## Chapter 6 – The Examination, Part Two

*Chapter 6 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

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### **Chapter 6 The Examination Part Two**

Poppy was working on the collar button of Severus' outer robes when he batted her hand away. "I can do that alone," he growled while glaring daggers at Poppy.

"Good, then I can help you out of your heavy boots. They could do much more harm than Harry's, couldn't they?"

"Maybe, but I'm mature enough not to use them against you," he spat at her.

"I wouldn't bet on that, Severus, and therefore they will come off," she said sternly, but she couldn't suppress a grin. She had his shoes off the moment he had removed his outer robes.

He sat on the bed in socks, black jeans and a black shirt. *This is ridiculous*, he thought while looking at himself. *I hope you know that you will pay for this, James.*

When he looked at the madly grinning James, his glance also fell on Harry, who was grinning from one ear to another. "What's so funny, Mr. Potter?" he said, growling playfully.

Harry really tried to stop smiling, but seeing his Potions master in those clothes and being undressed by Madam Pomfrey was too funny. "Nothing, Professor," he replied, trying to stop smiling. The only option he had was to turn his glance away from Snape. That brought him face to face again with James, who had already chosen two of the instruments from the little table.

"Okay, Harry, this one is a tiny lamp, which will help me to look into your eyes and mouth, and this one is a tongue depressor. It will help me hold down your tongue while I look into your mouth," James explained calmly.

"So, let the show begin, Poppy!" James cheerfully said while ignoring the manic look Severus gave him.

Poppy grabbed Severus' chin and turned his head to face her. "Here is where the action is."

Harry observed closely when Poppy moved the light of the little lamp several times into Snape's eyes. Then she ordered him to follow her fingers with his eyes without moving his head.

"Okay, Severus, now open up," she commanded while already holding the tongue depressor in front of Snape's mouth.

"Is that really necessary? I mean what's so scary about having your throat examined, Harry?" Severus looked pleadingly at Harry.

Before Harry could reply, James said, "Oh, so it's Harry again? A few minutes before it was Mr. Potter, Severus. He will not rescue you from it, so just do as Poppy said."

Severus groaned and faced Poppy again.

"As you said, what is so scary about a throat examination, Severus?" Poppy asked mockingly.

"Very funny!" Severus snarled, but resignedly opened his mouth.

When Poppy finished her observation of Severus' mouth, she looked at him sternly. She put the instruments away and tested his lymph nodes while saying strictly, "We will speak about this later, Severus."

Severus rolled his eyes and groaned. *How come I always get into trouble while trying to help the brat?*

Harry was so engrossed in Poppy scowling at Severus that James had to tap at his leg to get his attention again.

"Okay, now you, Harry," James said.

Once he had seen all this done to Professor Snape, it didn't scare him any longer. He was so deep in thought about why Madam Pomfrey was scolding Professor Snape that he automatically reacted to each order James gave him. When James said, "Well done," he was surprised that the first part was already over.

While James grabbed the next instrument, Harry finally asked the question he wanted to ask the whole time: "Why do you have to do all this? Can't you just check it all with a diagnostic spell?"

"Diagnostic spells are not as reliable as a direct examination. Sometimes spells don't let us see the early signs of an illness or a symptom, which we would find in a personal examination. And some people..." His eyes wandered to Severus. "... are capable of hiding symptoms from a diagnostic spell, but an adept Healer can not only see the examined body parts while conducting a personal examination, but also the reaction of his patient. Make sense to you, Harry?"

"Yes, I think it does now. Madam Pomfrey removed my Glamour Charm, but what if Professor Snape had one on his throat? She couldn't see whether he had a problem there, right?"

"As I said, a Healer doesn't only rely on what he sees. First, Madam Pomfrey would have seen Professor Snape's reluctant reaction to being examined, and that would already make her suspicious and very cautious. Then she would have noticed the way he swallows painfully, or the way he is grimacing after the examination, because an infected throat gets dry very fast during an examination. Those are only a few signs a Healer reads while conducting an examination. And all of this isn't possible when you just place a diagnostic spell on a person."

"I understand," Harry said, eyeing the next instrument in James' hand.

"This one is an ear speculum and helps me to see inside your ears," James explained and looked at Poppy again.

When she examined Severus' right ear, he had to look in James' direction. If looks could kill, James would be dead.

"You are a much better patient than your professor, Harry." James smiled and patted Harry's leg.

"Maybe, but I'm much better than you in dueling, James," Severus barked dangerously.

"If Professor Snape doesn't like to be examined, he doesn't have to do all this. You can examine me anyway." Harry tried to say all this with conviction, but his anxious look at the instruments gave his real thoughts away.

"Professor Snape will remember that he hadn't shown up at the annual staff examination last week, and only because I gave him a few days to come here of his own free will has he been spared from being on my examination table before now," Madam Pomfrey said strictly. "So you don't have to worry for him, Harry. Am I right, Professor?"

"Hmpf!" was the only reply she got from the stubborn Potions master.

"Don't move!" James said to Harry while he held his head to the side to look into one of his ears and then turned the head to check the other one.

James placed the speculum on the table and took the stethoscope. "This is a stethoscope. I can hear your heartbeat with it and can hear if your lungs are working right. But for that I have to put it on bare skin, and that means we have to remove your shirt."

Harry looked shocked. He knew that this would come at some point, but that didn't change the fact that he was still scared to let them see all his wounds. James saw his reaction and also noticed the small movement away from him. He immediately moved closer to Harry and laid his hands on Harry's legs to prevent him from moving away. "So, Poppy?" he said, and hoped that Harry would be distracted.

Severus was still observing Harry and his reaction when he felt Poppy pulling his shirt out of his trousers. He desperately clutched the hem of it and held it down. "You can't be serious. He's my student. I will not let him see me naked." Severus was barking at Poppy.

She was also not comfortable with the idea and therefore was reluctant. She couldn't believe that James really wanted Severus to be exposed like this. Out of the corner of her eye she could see James already pulling Harry's shirt over his head. So it just was a distracting tactic, she thought, relieved, and patted Severus' legs apologetically. "Sorry, Severus," she whispered while motioning with her head in Harry's direction.

Severus was so furious that he wasn't sure any longer if he would hold his promise to be mature enough not to kick at Poppy. Just the fact that she seemed unsure about removing his shirt held him back. *If she really wanted it gone, she would have it off me already*, he thought, confused. When he heard her whispered apology and followed her head motion, he understood.

Harry was so engrossed at the struggle between Poppy and his professor that he didn't even realize that James was removing his shirt from his jeans. *She can't force him to remove it. He's my teacher*, he thought, shocked. Harry didn't notice his arms automatically moving up to let James slip his shirt over his head and arms. Only when the shirt was pulled up over his face, and his gaze at Professor Snape was broken, did he realize that his shirt was gone. He looked in shock at James, who now held Harry's shirt in his hands.

"Maybe we will spare Professor Snape from having to remove his shirt, shall we?" Satisfied that his plan had worked, he smiled at Harry. He knew that Poppy would be unsure about exposing Severus like that, and Severus would not allow it to happen without putting up a fight. A good bottle of wine for Poppy and a very good whisky for Severus would hopefully ease their minds and keep them from being too angry with him for this.

Harry's face had turned red, and he was looking down at his bare chest and stomach.

"Professor Snape can keep his shirt on, but he won't get around the examination," Poppy said and took her own stethoscope.

That caught Harry's attention again and he looked with interest to see what would happen next to his professor.

Madam Pomfrey placed the furcated end of the instrument in her ears and then moved the other end under Professor Snape's shirt.

Severus was so glad that he could keep his shirt on that he didn't object to Poppy's hand under his shirt. As she checked his heart she ordered, "Breathe in deeply, Severus!" She moved the instrument to several places and ordered the Professor again and again to breathe deeply and sometimes to cough. Her face became sterner with each move.

"Will you finish, woman," Severus growled, annoyed.

"It will be finished when I say it is, Severus, so do as I say," she said strictly, glaring at him. "Be happy that Harry is here; it is all that is keeping me from telling you what I think about what I hear in your lungs."

"It's just a little cold. Don't make a fuss about it," Severus spat and then looked uncertainly at James, who also had a stern look on his face now.

"We will speak about your little cold later." Seeing Severus' anxious look at James, she added, "And I'm sure James would like to check it out as well."

Severus' face fell. *Fantastic! I have already missed two classes and now they will prevent me from working the whole day. That's what you get for helping Potter. If only he didn't have those green eyes. Exactly like Lily. I promised her to look after him and now this. She will turn in her grave when she sees what those bastard relatives have done to him.*

Poppy observed the emotions play on Severus' face. His expression changed from furious to sad. *What is he thinking about?* she wondered.

While Severus was still deep in thought, James started to examine Harry with his stethoscope.

James was very cautious where he placed the stethoscope in order not to hurt Harry. His whole back was covered with welts, and he had a lot of black marks on his back, chest and stomach. James noticed that Harry had problems breathing. A broken rib had damaged his left lung.

"Your lung is damaged, Harry. I will heal it later but first I will take care of the welts on your back, so that you can lie down for the rest of the examination. Okay?" he asked Harry, and waited for his agreement.

Harry anxiously nodded his head. He could see Professor Snape stand up and dress himself out of the corner of his eye. He felt the now familiar tingle while James was moving his hands over his back. Again he felt drowsy and sleepy.

"That's enough for the moment. I don't want you to fall asleep right now, Harry." James chuckled slightly while Harry struggled to fully awaken again. James used Harry's drowsiness to open Harry's trousers and removed his jeans while softly maneuvering him into a lying position. The hospital wing was always warm, but James still covered Harry from his waist down with the sheet. He hoped Harry would feel more comfortable with this.

"I'm so tired. Please let me sleep a while," Harry pleaded.

"Not now, Harry, but I'm almost through," James said softly. "Please open your mouth so that I can take your temperature."

Harry looked with confusion at the long thin thing that was hovering in front of his lips.

"You just have to place the business end under your tongue, Harry." With that explanation, James placed the thermometer in Harry's mouth.

While the thermometer took a reading, James took Harry's right wrist to feel his pulse.

Harry had almost forgotten the floating sheet and quill, but the fast movement it made to change its position made Harry aware of it again. The thermometer beeped, and James took it out of Harry's mouth to read it.

"You have a slight fever, but that is no wonder with your infected wounds. I will give you a fever reducer when we are done with the examination." He handed the thermometer to Poppy and half sat himself on the bed. "I will feel your stomach organs now. Therefore I have to push on several parts of your stomach. If something hurts, you have to tell me, okay?"

"Kay," Harry answered anxiously.

The examination went well, and Harry didn't feel any pain. James had skipped the parts where the black bruises were. Now James laid his right hand on the broken rib. "This will hurt now, Harry, but only for a short time. Madam Pomfrey will hold your hand and you must remember that the pain won't last long."

Harry's fear was back with full force. He even started to whimper until Madam Pomfrey took his hand and laid her calming hand on Harry's forehead. The moment Harry's gaze moved away from James' hands to Madam Pomfrey's face, he could feel the sharp pain in his chest. He cried out and wanted to curl himself into a ball, but Professor Snape had grabbed his feet and Madam Pomfrey was holding his head down and spoke calmly to him. "It's almost over, Harry! The worst is already done," she told him.

Tears were running down his cheeks, and he was sobbing softly, but he could already feel the pain decrease.

"Try to breathe deeply, Harry," Madam Pomfrey ordered Harry kindly.

Harry realized that he really could breathe deeply now. The pain was almost completely gone, and the tingle started again. This time Harry couldn't stop himself from falling asleep.

"What now, James?" Poppy asked when she realized James had increased the healing magic so that Harry fell asleep.

"We will roll him over so that I can see his bottom. I thought it would be better this way and I don't need him awake for it anyway."

Poppy and James turned Harry, who groaned in his sleep, but didn't wake up. Severus arranged the bed covers again at Harry's feet, which had been caught in them.

When James lowered the waistband of Harry's briefs, Poppy couldn't suppress a yelp. "God, what have they done to him?"

"These wounds must have been caused by a belt. It has made deep welts on the soft tissue of his bottom," James said in a professional voice. He was already starting to heal them. After a few moments the deep purple wounds were only a slight pink. James put the briefs in place again, and they moved Harry onto his back. A final diagnostic spell, and then James asked Poppy to dress him in pajamas and tuck him in. When he turned in Severus' direction, he saw a shocked man.

"I will kill them. I swear I will kill them," Severus muttered, still looking at Harry in shock.

"No, you will not, Severus," James said sternly, which caused Severus to tear his gaze from Harry to face him.

"You know about Lily, James. You have forced so many of my damn memories out of me. She would be so disappointed in me if she knew that I didn't keep them from hurting him."

"What's done is done, Severus. You cannot turn back the clock, but I'm sure Lily would want you to prevent this from happening again by helping Harry, not by becoming a murderer. You should think about a way to make him feel safe again, and help him to overcome the bad memories."

Severus had calmed down and was now looking at Harry again with a sad face. Poppy had tucked Harry in and was already opening the curtain around the bed.

"I will inform Albus while you check on our second patient here, James," Poppy said and then passed the now shocked-looking Severus as she made to leave the hospital wing.

"So, what have you got yourself into this time, Severus?" James asked mockingly, while leading Severus to a free bed to examine him.

*Merlin, Lily, your son really gets me into trouble whenever I try to do the right thing, he thought and groaned while following James to get the examination over as quickly as possible. I have to speak with Ivy and find a way to help the boy. Women are so much better with things like this. Especially my wife!*

## Chapter 7 – Professor Dumbledore-Snape

*Chapter 7 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with. AU

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## **Chapter 7 Professor Dumbledore-Snape**

When Harry woke up, he needed a short time to realize where he was and why he was there.

"Ah, you've finally woken up, Harry." Harry could hear a friendly female voice and knew before Professor Dumbledore-Snape came into his sight that it was her.

"Professor, why are you here? Is Professor Snape okay?" Harry remembered Madam Pomfrey's stern face when she had examined the Professor's throat and lung.

"Of course he is fine," she said, but seeing Harry's disbelieving face, she added, "Well, maybe he isn't really fine, but you don't have to worry. Right now he is sulking in his bed because James and Poppy Madam Pomfrey gave him a day of total bed rest. When I left, he was still arguing with James." She smiled, and Harry lost himself in it as happened so often when he heard her speak or saw her smile. Harry always imagined his mum, when she was still alive, to be like Professor Dumbledore-Snape.

"He'll be angry with me, because they found out about his illness because of me," Harry said sadly while he propped himself on his elbows to speak with his Professor easier.

"Don't worry, Harry. He isn't angry with you," she said while tilting the headboard of Harry's bed up so Harry could sit in the bed and still rest his back. "Right now, he is angry with the Headmaster because he didn't allow him to join the meeting with your relatives."

Harry's face fell at hearing her talk about his relatives. *They'll send me back now. Uncle Vernon will kill me for letting them see my wounds.*

Seeing Harry's scared expression, the Professor added quickly, "Don't worry, Harry! You never have to go back there. We will take care of you." She wanted to distract him and said, "Look, your friends have already sent you some letters. You are really popular, aren't you?"

*Her smile is really intoxicating. I immediately feel better when she smiles at me,* Harry thought and then looked in the direction his professor had pointed in. He grabbed the two letters from the bedside table and looked at the envelopes. 'To Harry Potter' was neatly written on the back of one. Harry knew this handwriting well; it was Hermione's. The other envelope was dirty, and 'Harry' was scribbled on it in big letters. Harry looked questioningly at his Professor.

"I don't know who sent it. Open it! I swear I won't sneak a peek." At the last sentence she theatrically laid a hand on her heart.

Harry grinned and quickly opened the dirty envelope. It was just a small letter, only a few lines, and under it was the sender's signature. "It's from Hagrid," he said and beamed at his Professor.

She only smiled in reply and sat down on the bed.

Harry read the lines quickly.

*Hi Harry,*

*I heard what happened. Why didn't you tell us? We would have helped you. Never mind! From now on we will take better care of you. I hope you can leave the hospital wing soon. Visit me as soon as possible.*

*Hagrid*

*P.S. Professor McGonagall helped me writing this letter.*

Harry looked up at his professor. "Do you want to read it?"

"It's your letter, Harry. But if you want, you can tell me what it says. You don't have to."

"He knows what happened, and he said I should have told someone earlier. And that I should visit him as soon as possible. Do you know when I'm allowed to leave the hospital wing, Professor?"

"No, Harry, I cannot tell you. You'll have to ask Madam Pomfrey or James about it. I think it depends on how you feel and how willing you are to work with them."

"Work with them?" Harry asked with confusion. "What do you mean?"

"You will still need medical treatment, Harry. We had to inform the Youth Welfare Department of the Ministry about the abuse you had to go through, of course. While you were asleep a Ministry Healer read James's report and checked with a spell who it was that caused your injuries. Your relatives already have to answer in front of the officials from the Ministry and the Headmaster. They will never be allowed to hurt you again, Harry."

Harry was shocked. "But now I'll have nowhere to go. They were the only relatives I had."

"Harry, you really don't have to worry. Maybe I shouldn't have told you about it. Poppy will have my head when she finds out that I've disturbed you. There are a lot of people who would love to take you in."

"Maybe they would want the hero Harry to live with them, but not the freak Harry," Harry mumbled sadly while looking at the letter in his hands.

"Harry!" Professor Dumbledore-Snape said, so shocked that Harry looked up, confused. "How can you say something like that? You are not a freak! Your relatives are freaks to have done this to you." She moved nearer to him on the bed and cupped his cheeks with her hands. "Look at me, Harry!"

Her hands felt so good on his face. He looked into her sad eyes. No smile was on her face. She was concerned and sad about what he had said, and Harry could see it. "Harry, you are a wonderful person. You have gone through so much and still kept your kindly nature. You have wonderful friends. Do you think they would be your friends if they didn't really love you? Do you think that they would call you a freak?"

Harry shook his head and wished his professor would never stop talking to him and never let go of his face.

"No, I didn't think so, Harry. And you shouldn't call yourself a freak, either. Because you aren't."

"But I didn't do anything to act like a hero. I let them beat me. What family would take in someone like me?"

"Harry, you are a hero. If you hadn't killed that snake, Voldemort could not have been destroyed. But that isn't important right now. Any family that just wanted to take you in because you are a hero wouldn't be the right one. But there are enough families that would love to show you how to live the life of a normal thirteen-year-old boy. That's what you are, Harry. Just a boy who should grow up with people who love him."

"But who would take me in?" Harry asked her, still not convinced that someone would take him in as just 'Harry, the boy' and not as 'Harry, the hero'.

"Severus and I, for example, would love to take you in. And I also know that Poppy and Alastor would love to take care of you. There are more families, but this isn't the right time to discuss it, Harry. I shouldn't have brought it up. You just have to know that we will be here for you, and you will have a choice in all this, okay?" She was still holding his face and tenderly stroked her thumbs over his cheekbones.

Harry was speechless. *They would take me in? The professors would take me in!* His mind was racing. He couldn't say anything and just stared at her.

"Harry, please, I will be in a lot of trouble when the Headmaster and Poppy find out that I spoke with you about all this. My father, your Headmaster, will speak with you when the meeting with your relatives is over, okay? Please calm down." She loosened her grip on his face, letting one hand rest a little longer on his cheek, and stroked the other over his head.

Harry leaned into the hand that was still on his cheek and almost whimpered when both hands left his head.

The Professor pointed at the other envelope in his hands. "You haven't opened the other one. Maybe it will distract you a little." She had found her warm smile again and managed to get one on Harry's face with it as well.

"It's from Hermione. For sure she sent me instructions about what I have to read to catch up with the stuff I missed in classes while I was stuck here," he said, happy that the Professor still was there with him. He wasn't alone.

*Harry,*

*What's wrong? We are so worried. Nobody will tell us what's happened. Professor McGonagall just told us you are in the hospital wing and need some rest. Madam Pomfrey didn't allow us to visit you. Nobody is telling us anything more. What happened when we left you with Professor Snape? Please let us know when you read this message.*

*Hermione & Ron*

He looked up at the professor and said, "They're worried because nobody will tell them what's wrong with me. Can't I send them a message or let them visit me?"

"Of course they can visit you. We thought that it should be your decision if you wanted them to know about what happened or how much you want to let them know. Madam Pomfrey wanted you to rest, but she gave her okay for a short visit as long as you don't agitate yourself. I have to shoo them out if they make you feel unwell, and I can't let you speak with them alone, so if you don't feel comfortable with this, you should wait until Madam Pomfrey allows you to see them alone."

"I don't mind if you stay," Harry smiled shyly and added, "It is nice to have you around." He looked at the letter again and asked, "But how can I tell them to come here? I would also like them to bring something for me."

"Just write them a small letter, and we'll ask a house-elf to deliver it to them. Classes are over already, so it won't get them into trouble."

"Yeah, that's a good idea. Do you have a quill?"

"Here on the bedside table, Harry." She stood up, took the quill and ink from the table and gave them to Harry.

"Thank you, Professor. I'll just write my message under Hermione's lines."

He was already writing his message when he felt the mattress shift as the Professor sat down again.

*Dear Hermione and Ron,*

*You can visit me now in the hospital wing. I will tell you what happened when you are here. We won't have much time because I'm only allowed a short visit and Prof. Dumbledore-Snape will be here as well. Please could you bring me my photo? You know where it is, Ron.*

*Bye, Harry*

He gave the quill and the ink back to the professor, and while she brought it back to the bedside table, he folded the letter and put it back in its envelope. When he looked up, he saw the professor standing expectantly beside his bed.

"Finished?" she asked, smiling.

He nodded and handed her the letter.

## Chapter 8 – Best Friends

*Chapter 8 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

### Chapter 8 – Best Friends

Only fifteen minutes later, his two worried-looking friends stumbled into the hospital wing.

"Harry, what happened?" Ron was already babbling, but stopped abruptly when he saw Professor Dumbledore-Snape stand up from the bed. "Oh. Hello, Professor."

"Hello to you two as well," she said cheerfully, smiling warmly at them. "I will give you three a little more privacy and sit down over there at the table, okay?" It was more of a statement than a question, but Harry nevertheless nodded and smiled at her.

Ron looked bewilderedly after his professor when she passed him. He turned back to Harry and asked, "Why is she here?"

"Merlin, Ron, stop bombarding him with questions. He'll tell us when you shut up, right, Harry?" Hermione said and came nearer to the bed.

Ron grimaced behind her and rolled his eyes, but then he also moved closer to the bed.

Harry sighed and looked uncertainly over at his professor. She was reading a magazine and at least seemed not to be interested in anything that the three teenagers were

doing. *How shall I begin?* he thought, while looking uncertainly at his two best friends.

"It's not so easy to tell you," Harry said sadly and looked down at his hands.

"Oh, Harry, you know you can tell us everything. We're your best friends," Hermione said enthusiastically and sat down beside Harry.

Ron, meanwhile, sat down on the bed at Harry's feet.

"I know, but it's still very hard... and embarrassing," Harry said, still looking at his hands.

Hermione and Ron didn't say anything and just waited for Harry to go on.

Harry sighed and looked up. "I lied to you in the train and in my letters. My uncle didn't leave me alone this summer. It was really bad."

Hermione grabbed his hand, and Ron was looking at him with a sympathetic expression on his face.

"I was wearing a Glamour Charm in your presence. In reality, I looked really bad."

"You still look really bad, Harry," Hermione said nonchalantly.

Harry felt his face with his hands, but couldn't find anything. "I haven't looked in a mirror since Madam Pomfrey took the spell from me. But James, er Healer Smith, has healed almost all my wounds. I feel much better now."

"You look pale and sick. And you've big bags under your eyes, Harry."

"Yes, and that's exactly the reason why he is only allowed a short visit, Ms. Granger."

Hermione and Ron jumped from the bed in shock. They had been so engrossed in what Harry was telling them that they didn't notice Madam Pomfrey coming in.

"Of course, Madam Pomfrey," Hermione said. "We haven't been here for long."

Hermione and Ron's gaze followed the nurse while she approached Harry to cast several diagnostic spells on him.

"Mr. Potter still needs rest. You can visit him later," Madam Pomfrey said sternly.

Harry began to protest, "But I haven't told them the most important part, Madam Pomfrey, please, only—"

"No, Harry, you have to eat something, and then you will sleep a while," Madam Pomfrey said sternly.

"But the Professor said that the Headmaster will come to speak with me. What if I'm asleep then?" Seeing that all this didn't seem to interest her, he added stubbornly, "And I'm not tired at all."

"When you start to push out your bottom lip and sulk, I swear I will take a picture of it and show it to you every time you say that you are too old to be fussed over," Madam Pomfrey said threateningly.

Harry looked for help to his professor, who had come over to the foot of the bed.

"You had better do what she says, Harry. I'm sure you won't miss the Headmaster when he comes to visit you," she said calmly.

He sighed and reluctantly said, "Okay."

"Come on, you two, I will accompany you to your dormitories," the professor said and started to push the teenagers in the direction of the door.

Ron ducked under her arm. "I totally forgot. Here, Harry." He handed the photo of Harry's parents to Harry, and then he quickly went back to the professor and Hermione.

"I will come and visit you later, Harry," the professor said over her shoulder while she led the teenagers out of the infirmary.

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Under the watchful eyes of Madam Pomfrey, Harry ate more than he would have without her prodding. He felt so full that it almost hurt. He felt very exhausted and was now glad that he could sleep a while.

"But you will wake me when the Headmaster comes to visit me, Madam Pomfrey, won't you?" Harry looked pleadingly at the nurse.

"You will be awake when he comes to visit you, Harry. He won't be back until late afternoon," Madam Pomfrey explained while tucking the already drowsy teen in the bed.

After Harry gulped down a fever reducer and a Dreamless Sleep potion, he fell asleep the moment his head hit the pillow.

"Not tired at all, hmm?" Poppy said, smiling. She brushed the loose wisps of hair out of his face and softly said, "Sleep well, child."

## Chapter 9 - The Talk with Albus

*Chapter 9 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with. AU

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

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## Chapter 9 -- The Talk with Albus

When Harry woke up, it was already late afternoon. The hospital wing was quiet. He didn't want Madam Pomfrey to fuss over him or nag him into eating, so he didn't announce that he was awake. So many thoughts were going through his head. Harry was sad that he couldn't tell his friends about the offer the professors had made to take him in. He would have loved to hear their opinions. But Madam Pomfrey's intervention prevented him from telling them.

Harry sat up in his bed with crossed legs. He was tired of lying down*What could I do?* He thought and looked around. *Madam Pomfrey won't be happy if I leave the bed, but I don't want her to hold me here longer than necessary.*

Harry reached for his pillow and took out the photo he had placed under it when Ron and Hermione had been ushered out by Madam Pomfrey. He looked at it longingly until the door of the infirmary opened and the headmaster came in.

"Good afternoon, Harry. I hope you had a good rest," Professor Dumbledore said cheerfully.

Quickly, Harry shoved the photo under the pillow again. "Morning, Professor," he greeted the old wizard. Harry was torn between curiosity and fear of what the headmaster would tell him about his relatives.

When the professor reached him, he Summoned a chair, Transfigured it into a comfortable armchair, and sat down. "So, how are you, Harry?" he asked again while eyeing his young charge.

"I'm fine. Just bored," Harry answered honestly.

"That's good to hear. You gave us quite a shock, my boy. You should have told us," Albus said gently, but his tone was also a little bit scolding.

Harry looked ashamedly at his hands and replied, "I know, sir, but I didn't want to talk about it." He looked up and added, "And I still don't want to talk about it."

"There is absolutely nothing to be ashamed about, Harry, but I will accept your wish not to speak about it with me. But that doesn't change the fact that you have to speak with someone about it, to get it off your chest. The Ministry also demands frequent therapy."

"Therapy?" Harry asked, shocked.

"Harry, what your relatives did to you was very bad. They should have taken care of you, but instead they abused you. No child should experience what you had to go through. They will pay for it. I just came back from the official hearing of your relatives in the Ministry. Do you want to know what the Ministry has decided?"

Harry wasn't sure if he wanted to know. He was scared and couldn't say why, but he also needed to know what would happen with his relatives and what the Ministry had decided for him. "Yes, sir," Harry answered, almost whispering.

"The Ministry had to change quite a few Muggle memories, but your uncle is already moved to a prison camp on a South American island. Your aunt's and cousin's minds have been modified so that they won't remember you. We know that she didn't do anything to prevent your uncle from hurting you, but she was a loving mother to your cousin, and so the Ministry decided that she should have the chance to start a new life with her son. The Ministry will keep a close eye on them from now on."

Albus stopped to observe Harry's reaction. When he realized that Harry was still calm and looked interested, he continued. "I have heard that my nosy daughter couldn't stop herself from already giving you a few details about the changes that will come into your life, correct?" The headmaster cocked an eyebrow.

Harry felt the urge to protect his History professor. "She didn't tell me much, sir. Please don't be mad at her."

"Show me one human being that is capable of being mad at that girl," Albus said, chuckling.

*Okay, I wouldn't call her a girl, but at least he isn't angry with her* Harry thought, relieved.

"As she already told you, the Ministry demands that you will be closely observed from now on. That means that even during the school year, you will have to live with a family. It will be easier for them to see if you can cope with the situation, and they can oversee that you regularly eat, sleep and have therapy. I think you want to go to school, and so we had to find a family here at Hogwarts. The Ministry would prefer it if you decided to live with my daughter and Professor Snape, but I convinced them to give you at least one other possibility. Therefore you could also decide to live with Madam Pomfrey and Professor Moody, if you prefer." Albus paused, giving Harry a chance to make a decision.

"Can't I just live in the dormitories?" Harry knew that the answer would be 'no', but he had to at least to try.

"No, Harry. To be honest it was quite a fight for your Head of House and myself to convince the Ministry that you'd be better off staying with people you know than to be treated at St. Mungo's," the headmaster explained sadly.

"St. Mungo's?" Harry asked, in shock.

"What your relatives did to you was very inhumane, Harry. That leaves scars, and I don't mean the visible ones. The Ministry wants to be sure that you will cope with the pain caused by these scars, and that you can make peace with your past. That's why they also insist on therapy. You have to speak with someone about what you had to go through. Repressing the memories and running away from them won't make them go away," Albus said severely.

Harry looked again down at his hands. "Am I still allowed to see my friends?"

Albus laughed, but it was a sad laugh. "Of course you are allowed to see your friends. You will not be a prisoner. You can visit your friends in the Gryffindor tower, and you can invite them to come down to your quarters to visit you."

"And where do I have to go for... therapy?" The word therapy didn't come easily from his lips.

"The healer will come and visit you on a regular basis in your quarters. You don't have to go anywhere. James would like to offer to take this part, but he can refer other possible therapists. He thought that you might prefer to speak with a woman."

"No!" Harry said very quickly. "I don't want to speak with someone else. Can it be James?"

"Of course, Harry. Calm down." Albus stood up when Harry started to get agitated and seated himself again on the edge of the bed. "Have you decided with whom you want to live?"

"I think I would like to live with Professor Snape and Professor Dumbledore-Snape, sir," Harry mumbled, not taking his eyes from his hands.

Albus laid a comforting hand on Harry's leg and said, "I think they will be very glad to hear that, but it's only fair to tell you that this also means you will live with your Head of House and me."

Harry looked at his headmaster with confusion. "You all live together?"

"Is that so shocking?" Albus asked with a smile. "We all respect the privacy of the others, and you will have your privacy as well, Harry. But we can explain all of this in



more detail when Madam Pomfrey releases you."

This made Harry look up. "Do you know when she will allow me to leave?"

"I have been told that she wants to give you a check-up after supper, and then she will decide if you can be released or have to stay another night. I have to go now. I'm sure your friends will come soon to visit you again, and my daughter said she will come to accompany you while you sup. Do you need anything else?"

"How is Professor Snape, sir?" Harry asked quickly.

"First, you don't have to call me sir all the time now, Harry. In private I'm Albus. Second, Severus is as fine as he can be while being forced to stay in bed with bronchitis. After a day in bed he will feel much better. You don't have to worry. Madam Pomfrey and James are keeping a close eye on him." He stood up and patted Harry's leg one last time. "I'm very glad that you decided to live with us, Harry. Welcome to our family."

Harry smiled shyly back at the headmaster. "Thank you, sir."

Albus cocked his head and raised an eyebrow. "What's my name?"

Harry blushed and uncertainly said, "Albus."

"That's my boy," Albus said while affectionately ruffling Harry's hair.

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**Please review**

## Chapter 10 - The Nervous Breakdown

*Chapter 10 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 10 - The Nervous Breakdown

Only half an hour had passed before his two friends returned to the hospital wing. They carefully looked around for Madam Pomfrey.

"Don't worry, she isn't here and won't come back soon. She had an emergency call from St. Mungo's and is over there now," Harry said to calm the nerves of his friends.

The two walked over to his bed, and Hermione said, "You look a little better. How do you feel?"

"I'm fine. Maybe Madam Pomfrey will release me after supper or whenever she comes back," Harry replied. *Damn, I hadn't thought about that. Maybe she won't come back in time, and then I'll have to stay here for another night. Fantastic that's the punishment for my happiness over her leaving. I was just so happy that I would have the possibility to speak with Hermione and Ron without an audience,* Harry thought guiltily.

"Great, so you'll come back tonight. It was really boring to sleep without worrying that you'd throw a pillow at me if you thought I was snoring," Ron said happily.

*Okay, I should say it now,* Harry thought and took a deep breath.

But before he could react to Ron's outburst of friendship, Hermione said, while pretending to be shocked, "You snore?"

"Of course I don't! It's just Harry's imagination," Ron answered, blushing.

When both looked back at Harry, they realized that he was paler than before.

"Everything okay, Harry? Should we call someone?" Hermione asked, worried.

Harry sighed. *Better I get it over with soon.* "No, you don't have to call anyone. Please just sit down and let me tell you what I wanted to tell you during your last visit."

Ron was looking as if someone had taken away his Chudley Cannons poster, and Hermione looked so worried that Harry immediately added, "It's not that bad, but I'm still not sure how you will react to the news."

"Merlin, don't torture us any longer," Ron said, still very worried but also impatient. He sat down on the foot of the bed and looked expectantly at Harry.

Hermione sat down beside Harry and placed her hand on Harry's hand.

Harry took another deep breath and started to explain what Dumbledore had told him. At the end of his explanation, Ron's mouth dropped open.

"You have to live with Snape? The greasy git?" he asked, shocked.

"He will live with the Dumbledore-Snape family, Ron," Hermione scolded him and tried to mimic his shocked reaction to embarrass him into stopping. She turned around to Harry and added, "I think it's a wonderful idea, Harry. You'll enjoy living with a real family." She smiled at him warmly but seemed a little unsure.

Ron wouldn't be Ron if he was able to understand Hermione's non-verbal cues, so he didn't stop. "Good idea? Are you crazy? You can't come back to our dormitory? But that's not fair! Why won't they let you come back?" He jumped up from the bed.

Hermione was furious. She looked at Harry's shocked face and jumped up, starting to shout at Ron. "Didn't you listen to anything Harry told us last time? Of course they won't just let him go back to your dormitory! You are so selfish, Ron."

Harry, meanwhile, was lost in panic. *He didn't take it well. He is furious and will never visit me down in the dungeons. I will lose him as a friend* Harry started to feel dizzy, and his breathing quickened. He had the feeling that his mind was running off, and his thoughts were twisting. From far away he could hear Hermione still arguing with Ron.

He could only catch parts of what was spoken, but what he caught made him panic even more. Ron was saying something about Snape still being a cold bastard, and that Harry wasn't a mental freak. The word *freak* was echoing in his head and wouldn't go away. He flinched when he felt a hand placed on his chest and another one on his head. The familiar feeling of calming magic flowed through his chest and head, and he started to relax. The headboard was lowered, and Harry could breathe more freely.

"That's it, Harry. Calm down. Everything is okay." James's calm, deep voice penetrated Harry's foggy mind.

Harry tried to shake his head. *No, nothing is okay. He doesn't want to be my friend any longer.* Tears were running down his cheeks, and he started to sob. He tried to fight it. *Merlin, this is embarrassing. I'm such a freak. Freak. Freak. Freak* it echoed in his head.

"It's okay, Harry. Just let go. It's only me and James." Harry could hear Ivy's voice and felt her taking his hand. "I sent your friends away."

More sobs escaped Harry. "No friends. I'm a freak," he croaked desperately.

James increased the flow of magic and gently said, "That's not true, Harry. You still have your friends, and you are not a freak. Everything will clear up when you speak to them next time."

"No!" Harry said, still in despair. But the steady flow of calming magic ebbed his sobbing, and he slowly calmed down.

Ivy started to stroke his hair the moment James took his hand away from his forehead. "Harry, you know Ron. He didn't mean what he said. I'm sure he already regrets it."

Harry felt that all of his thoughts were disentangling themselves again, and he was beginning to think more clearly now. He was also more aware of his surroundings and looked first at Ivy, then at James, who was still letting a trickle of magic flow through his chest.

"Better?" James asked softly. He eyed Harry closely, and when he saw him nod, he removed his hand from Harry's chest.

Harry started to wipe away the tears on his face with his free hand. He felt wetness on his neck *Merlin, I'm such a baby.* He tried to wipe the wetness away from his neck and was surprised when he suddenly felt totally dry. When he looked at James, he could see that he had his wand in hand and obviously had dried his face, neck and bedclothes with a spell.

He closed his eyes in annoyance at his behavior, and when he opened them again, he said desperately, "Madam Pomfrey will not release me after this." He almost felt like sobbing again.

"No worries, Harry. This has nothing to do with your dismissal from the hospital wing. You will have emotional problems like this for some time. It's absolutely normal. We'll teach you to control it with therapy sessions. Right now, I want you to drink this potion to help you to relax." James moved the headboard up again and handed Harry the vial.

"Do I have to go to sleep again?" He eyed the potion skeptically.

"No, this potion won't make you sleepy, it just prevents you from dwelling on negative thoughts for a while," James explained patiently.

Harry trusted James. *It's crazy that I feel so safe around these two. Two days ago I thought I would never feel safe again in my life and now this!* He drank the potion and handed the empty vial to James.

James was glad that Harry had calmed down and reacted positively to their help. He placed the empty vial on the night table and took Harry's wrist to feel his pulse.

Harry relaxed. The potion was letting his thoughts just swim on the surface of his mind. No deep dwelling was possible, and so he could concentrate on the present situation. Ivy was still holding his hand and stroking his hair softly. James had finished his pulse reading and looked thoughtfully at Harry.

"How do you feel? Do you think you could have supper with us?" James asked Harry.

"I'm fine. The potion worked really well," Harry said, relieved.

"Yes, it is quite good, but it doesn't change the fact that we will have to speak about this later, Harry," he said, looking seriously at Harry.

"I know!" Harry answered sullenly and lowered his eyes.

It wasn't the time to speak with Harry about his reaction to the discussion with his friends. James and Ivy had heard Hermione scolding Ron while they were still outside the infirmary. When they had gone in, they could hear Ron saying things about Severus and about Harry's mental status. *I think the word freak let Harry get lost in his depression and started a panic attack,* James analyzed. *I'll have to speak with Ron and Hermione later.*

"Can we all eat at the table or is it better for Harry to stay in bed?" Ivy asked James.

"He isn't an invalid, Ivy. A bathrobe and slippers, and then we all can eat our supper together at the table. What do you think, Harry?"

It felt so good that James didn't treat him like a freak or a mental patient. Harry nodded happily and sat up to let Ivy help him into the robe and the slippers.

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They had hardly started to eat when the hospital door opened and Alastor Moody came into the room. He looked a little surprised at the small group at the table. "Oh, enjoying your meal?" He limped over to the table. "Good to see you again, James. It seems you and my wife have done wonders for young Harry here." He patted Harry's shoulder and smiled at him when he looked up into his face. "How do you feel?"

"I'm fine," Harry said, and after a quick glance in James' direction, he added, "At least, I am now."

"Problems?" Alastor asked worriedly.

Harry sighed heavily. Before he could start to tell Professor Moody that he would prefer not to speak about it, the old man said, "It's okay if you don't want to speak about it. Just know that you always can come and talk to me, okay?"

Harry nodded. It felt awkward that so many people were worried about him and wanted to help him *Maybe I really should have told them earlier. That would have spared me a lot of trouble.*

To change the topic, Professor Moody, his hand still resting on Harry's shoulder, asked James, "How is Severus? Did you have to bind him to the bed?"

"He is fine, Alastor. But I have to admit that I had to drug him a little to keep him in bed. Tomorrow he will feel much better, and I'm sure I will pay for it," James answered cheerfully. "Why don't you join us?"

"No, no, I just wanted to see Poppy. Is she in her office?"

"She was called to St. Mungo's for an emergency," James explained. "She didn't know when she would be back. You really can join us for supper; maybe she will arrive soon."

Alastor thought about it briefly and said, "Okay, but just for a cup of tea. I'm not hungry." He sat down in the free chair at the table.

James Summoned another cup, plate and silverware. Before Alastor could protest, he said, "Not eating regularly doesn't do you any good. You don't want to be a bad role model for Harry, do you?"

Alastor glared at James. All the arguments about how he was much older than James, and knew what was good for himself were discredited by James's choice of reasons. *Damn manipulative Healer*, Alastor thought grumpily.

Harry smirked because he knew that his Defense Against the Dark Arts professor was cornered by James's argument *It's funny to see what an effect James has even on the most feared professors of Hogwarts.*

"There, there, Alastor," Ivy said calmly and patted his arm. "Poppy will be so glad when we tell her you ate with us."

"Not you as well, young lady. I pampered you while you were a baby and now you think you can manipulate me like this sneaky Healer here?" Alastor growled at Ivy while gesturing with his head to James.

Harry almost spat his mouthful of tea on the table at Alastor's words.

"Look, you made Harry upset by refusing to eat with us," Ivy said innocently. "You don't want him to be upset, right?" With that she filled his cup with hot tea and offered him the breadbasket.

Alastor glared daggers at Ivy but grumpily took a slice of bread and placed it on his plate.

They all ate peacefully together until Poppy arrived.

## Chapter 11 - Poppy in Distress

*Chapter 11 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

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### Chapter 11 - Poppy in Distress

When Poppy emerged from the fireplace, she immediately spotted the small group sitting around the table. "What are you doing out of bed, young man?" she asked and went over to her patient.

Before Harry or James could say anything, she waved her wand over Harry and frowned. "What happened here, James?" She looked angrily at her colleague.

"It's nothing, Poppy. Harry just-"

"*Nothing?* I beg you pardon, but I think that anything that causes you to give my patient a calming draught definitely isn't *nothing*."

James sighed. "Poppy, you were at St. Mungo's, and we had the whole situation under control. You know as well as I that this won't be the last time he needs to take the potion. I'm his healer as well, and the problems he had were mental problems, so I didn't see the necessity of informing you while you were otherwise occupied."

Harry didn't like to be the reason for these two to be speaking in such tones. It was obvious that both were holding back because of the audience they had. He didn't seem to be the only one who had noticed this.

Ivy came over to him and gently said, "Come on, Harry, we should get you back in bed." She slowly moved him over to his bed and helped him out of his bathrobe and slippers and into the bed.

"He is fine, Poppy. He ate a good supper and is calm now." James tried to reason with Poppy. He knew her temper, but he also knew that it was just because she was very concerned.

"I still would have liked to have been informed, James. A nervous breakdown is serious; don't play it down."

"I don't play it down, Poppy. You had been called to St. Mungo's for an emergency, and we had to act very quickly. There was no time to inform you. Harry reacted to the treatment and the potion very well, and so I saw no reason to disturb you. Of course, I would have informed you the moment you came back here, but you didn't give me a chance."

Poppy sighed. "Yes, I know. I'm sorry. The emergency at St. Mungo's... oh... never mind."

Alastor came over to her and placed a hand on her shoulder. "Everything okay?"

"Yes, of course," she said sadly. She look up into Alastor's worried face, laid a hand on his chest, and said, "It's hard to accept that we can't help them all. It was just a child." She laid her head on his chest and breathed deeply.

"I know, my dear, but we have to concentrate on the living. It doesn't help when you rack your brain about something that can't be undone." He drew small, calming circles on her back.

James gave the two the privacy they needed and went over to Harry and Ivy. He knew that Poppy and Alastor were a well-rehearsed couple; Alastor knew exactly how to calm the nerves of his wife.

"Is she okay?" Harry asked worriedly.

"She will be in a moment, Harry. Sometimes even the adults need some comfort," James said softly. "From time to time, events throw us off track as well, but we have learned how to control our feelings, or others around us have learned how to help and support us in these moments. That's what you will learn as well while living with the Snapes and the Dumbledores." James smiled at Harry and was relieved when the tension that the boy had regained during the encounter left his body.

Poppy and Alastor had placed a silencing charm over themselves and were still talking.

"Oh, what's this?" Ivy said while she bent down for something. When she stood up again, she had a photo in her hand.

Harry grabbed his cushion and realized that the photo of his parents wasn't there anymore. "It's mine. It must have fallen down."

Ivy handed him the photo. "Are these your parents, Harry?" She asked while sitting down on the edge of the bed.

"Yes. Hagrid gave me the photo," Harry explained while looking longingly at the moving picture.

"May I see it as well, Harry?" James asked.

After having a look at it, he said, "They look very kind and friendly."

Harry beamed at James, and then he asked Ivy the question he had always wanted to ask her, "Did you know them?"

"No, Harry, they were both three classes ahead of me, and so I hardly had anything to do with them. Severus was a good friend of Lily's, but he never get along with James. But Lily and Severus had contact until... you know... until she got killed. You should ask him about it someday. I'm sure he can tell you a lot about her."

"He hated my father, didn't he?" Harry asked.

"It's not my place to tell you about Severus' relationship with your parents. You should speak with him about it," Ivy said to him and stroked his hair sadly.

"I don't think he would speak with me about them. Professor Lupin said that he hated my father and that is the reason why he treated me so coldly as well."

"That's not true, Harry!" Ivy exclaimed, "Severus doesn't hate you. I know that it was hard for him to see you because you look exactly like your father when he was young. They had big problems while they went to school, and losing your mother to him wasn't something he could easily forgive. Severus never hated you. Maybe he was unfair sometimes, but only because he saw James in you and didn't want the son of Lily to become someone like your father. Don't misunderstand me, Harry; I'm not saying your father wasn't a good man, but for Severus, he was just his childhood enemy."

"Some things not even adults can forget, and some memories make us do unfair things to innocents. He often regretted what he said to you, but couldn't find a way to tell you or show you. After the battle, he thought he had found a way to show you his respect. He realized that you aren't like your father. He wanted to give you a new chance as Harry and not as James' son. He tried to be there for you, and he was very concerned when you looked so worn out at the Sorting feast. When he brought you here in the hospital wing, he wanted to take care for you. He isn't a bad man, even if he can't speak well about your father. And he is very concerned about you, Harry," Ivy finished, looking worriedly at him. Her face had lost all its warmth, and she looked sad and hurt.

"It's hard. I want to see my dad as a good man," Harry said, trying not to look into the sad face of Ivy.

"I know, and that is understandable. Speak with Professor Lupin. He was his best friend and can tell you of a lot of happy memories. Severus only has bad memories about him. But that has nothing to do with you. Please don't let this stand between us, Harry. Give Severus a chance; I'm sure he won't disappoint you. He was one of your mother's best friends. Do you think she would have been friends with him if he was so bad?"

Harry was surprised. "I don't think he is bad. He was the only one who saw what was wrong with me and helped me. He didn't leave me alone, and even let Madam Pomfrey examine him for me." He leaned over and grabbed her hand. "Please don't be so sad. I don't hate him for what he thinks about my father. I just meant that I don't want to see my father like he sees him."

"I'm sure he wouldn't want you to think badly about your dad, Harry," James said. "He can tell you many things about your mom that not even Professor Lupin knows. Severus knew your mother long before Hogwarts. Maybe you can speak with him about her and share good memories. For the stories about your dad, just speak with Professor Lupin."

"That's okay." Seeing the still-worried face of Ivy, he added, "Really, Prof...Ivy." It wasn't easy to address her by her first name, but he hoped it would help the situation. He smiled shyly, and when she started to smile again, he felt much better.

"So you still want to live with us? At least for now?" she asked, squeezing his hands.

"Of course I want to," Harry said soulfully.

"Then we should check your condition, young man," said Poppy, who had finished her conversation with Alastor and now stood beside Harry's bed.

"Are you okay, Madam Pomfrey?" Harry asked.

"I certainly am, Mr. Potter, and now let me do my work," Madam Pomfrey said in a voice that made it clear she didn't want to say more.

Harry was curious about the diagnostic spell. He wanted to leave the hospital wing even though he was very nervous about moving in with the professors*What will it be like to live with them? What rules will they have, and what will happen when I break them? Not that I plan to do so, but at the Dursleys I often broke rules even when I didn't know it or want it.* Harry could feel the light tickle of the diagnostic spell.

"You are still underweight, and your system needs a lot of rest. If you promise to eat regularly and rest enough, I will let you leave the infirmary."

Harry started to smile in relief, and he was about to jump from the bed, but Madam Pomfrey stopped him with her outstretched hand, "I'm not finished, Mr. Potter. By 'enough rest,' I mean that you will have to go to bed at 8:30 on weekdays and 9:30 during weekends." Harry's eyes widened in shock, but Madam Pomfrey continued, "and you have to rest every day after lunch for around one hour, or better, two. Should you not follow these rules, you will find yourself back in my hospital wing within the minute. Do I make myself clear?"

"But, Madam Pomfrey... that's too early. I'm not a baby, and you can't be serious about the nap time," Harry said, shocked.

"I'm dead serious, Mr. Potter. If you don't agree, you will stay. So it is your choice," Madam Pomfrey said in her no-nonsense voice.

"Okay," Harry said, groaning.

"Good. James or I will check on you each day for the next few days. I also want you to come to me if you feel unwell. If I find out that you have hidden something from me, I will not be so nice the next time, and I will definitely make you stay longer in the infirmary than this time."

"I understand," Harry said grumpily.

"Very well. I will see you tomorrow evening," Poppy said, this time sounding more friendly. "Please put this salve on your fading wounds once a day in the morning for at least five more days. It will help your skin to heal better, and it won't tense up so much."

"Okay," Harry said compliantly and took the salve.

Ivy, meanwhile, had retrieved his clothes from the night table. She handed them to Harry. "Let me take the salve and you change into your clothes."

It felt a little awkward because the adults didn't give him privacy to change, but he didn't want to ask them to turn away, out of embarrassment. The adults didn't look at him and were engrossed in their conversation. They spoke about what Ivy had to take care of and when James or Poppy would come to check on him. When Harry was finished, he stood nervously in front of the adults. Only when Ivy smiled at him and slowly stroked his cheek did he relax a little.

"Okay, Harry, let's go. The twins are already so excited and can't wait any longer to see you move in," Ivy said, gently guiding Harry into the direction of the fireplace.

Harry turned to say goodbye to Poppy and James, took a deep breath, and then followed Ivy into the fireplace.

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 12 – Harry's New Home

*Chapter 12 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 12 Harry's New Home

When they emerged from the fireplace, an excited Professor McGonagall came over to them. "It's so nice to see you, Harry. I'm sorry that I couldn't visit you in the hospital wing, but I had to arrange the papers for the guardianship and cover for Albus while he was at the Ministry."

"It's no problem, Professor McGonagall. I had a lot of visitors." Immediately, he had a stabbing feeling in his heart because he remembered the conflict with Ron and Hermione.

Professor McGonagall laid a hand on his shoulder and smiled sympathetically at him. "I'm very glad that you decided to live with us. Maybe..." She couldn't finish her sentence because loud, fast footsteps were coming down the staircase opposite the entrance door and slightly to the right of the fireplace.

"He's here, Ly, come on!" the small, black-haired boy shouted while he hustled down the stairs.

Harry had seen the Snape twins before, but it was still funny to see a miniature copy of Professor Snape running down the stairs. Harry couldn't hide his grin.

"Stop running, Eathan!" Ivy said worriedly. "You'll fall down."

Eathan stopped abruptly and then climbed down the stairs more carefully. "Yes, Mum."

The other twin appeared at the top of the staircase. He came down very carefully and never took his eyes off Harry.

Meanwhile, Eathan had reached Harry and bounced up and down in front of him. "You're here, you're here!"

Harry was a little bewildered because he didn't understand why Eathan was so excited about him being here. He looked helplessly from Professor McGonagall to Ivy, but before either of them could say anything, a deep baritone broke the silence.

"Let him breathe, Eathan!" Professor Snape said, and took his other son in his arms as he passed him on the stairs.

Lysander leaned into his dad's neck while they both came closer to Harry. It was obvious that the twins had totally different characters. Lysander seemed to be a little shy and careful while Eathan seemed to be very open and active.

"You should be in bed, Severus," Professor McGonagall scolded the Potions Master.

Severus just rolled his eyes and said, "I'm fine, and that sneaky Healer better not dare to come near me soon." Before any of the women could say anything, he addressed Harry, "So Madam Pomfrey finally released you?"

"Yes, she had a few rules for me, but I'm allowed to move in now," Harry said, a little unsure whether he had to give a full report about exactly what rules Madam Pomfrey had set.

"Rules?" Severus asked while raising his eyebrow. "What rules, exactly?"

"Rules are stupid!" Eathan stated rebelliously and crossed his arms in front of his chest.

"Watch your mouth, young man, or you will go to bed," Severus said strictly.

Eathan started to pout and pushed his bottom lip out.

"And pouting won't help either," Severus said while placing Lysander down.

"Maybe we should introduce the kids, Severus, before we ask for rules or start to set rules." Ivy tried to coax her son out of his misery. Eathan often couldn't hold his temper and got into trouble with his father. "This is Eathan," Ivy said while patting Eathan's head and slowly pulling him against her legs.

Eathan was happy that his mother had rescued him. He never knew how to react when he got himself into trouble. *Lysander always has it so much easier. I really hope Harry is cooler than Ly. Maybe he'll fly with me and my new broom. He's the best Quidditch player in Hogwarts!*

"And this one is Lysander," Severus said as he tried to push the little boy half-hiding behind his left leg in front of him.

Lysander was also very happy about his new brother. *Oh, yeah, Mom said we should not call him that because he still might decide not to live with us. I just hope he won't only play with Eathan. Maybe he can teach me to fly better so that Eathan can't beat me every time we fly for a race.*

"Hi, you two!" Harry said, a little unsure what to do or say.

"Shall I show you my broom?" Eathan asked. He grabbed Harry's hand and tried to pull him in the direction of the stairs.

Ivy quickly grabbed her over-eager son around his waist and pinned him against her legs again. "Eathan, what did we talk about?"

Eathan sighed and said, "We should let Harry move in in peace, and then Harry can decide if he wants to play with us." He looked sadly at the floor. "But we had to wait long!"

"Eathan, Harry hasn't even seen his new home or his room. He cannot just start playing with you, and he might not play with you at all, if he doesn't want to," she said to the child, who was now craning his neck to look up at her. When she looked at Harry again, she said, "Don't let them annoy you too much. If you don't want to play with them, just say so and they will have to accept it."

Harry looked at Eathan, who now was looking at him. Eathan's puppy-dog look was perfect, and Harry had to laugh. "You are quite good at pulling that face, aren't you? Can anyone resist it?"

"Oh, yes!" Severus said. "And you should learn to, as well, or you will not have a free minute from now on."

Harry knelt down in front of Lysander. "What's with you? Do you also have a broom?"

Lysander was happy that Harry spoke to him. *Maybe he will really play with me and not just with Eathan.* He shyly nodded his head. "But I'm not as good as Eathan."

Eathan had moved over to his brother and now stood proudly beside him.

"Then we have to change that, don't we?" Harry said.

"Yeah!" both boys were shouting because for them it sounded like an invitation to flight training right now. "Brooms out!" They ran, still screaming with excitement, in the direction of the broom cupboard where they ran into their grandfather, who caught both in his arms.

"Not so fast, young men!" Albus said; he'd just come through one of the portraits on the wall when he saw the twins. It was obvious that they shouldn't go flying at this time, so he tried to stop them before their father could lose his patience with them and send them to bed.

"But, Grandpa, Harry wants to fly with us. Ly will learn to fly faster now! Harry is the best!" Eathan was so excited that Albus feared the boys would never get to sleep tonight.

"I'm sure he is the best, but I'm also sure that it is a little late for a fly now," Albus said to calm the twins.

"Oh, it's dark, right?" Eathan asked. He hadn't thought about that.

"Yes, it is! Has Harry already seen his room?" Albus asked, even though he knew the answer. Phineas, the man in the portrait that led to his office and back to the house, had told him just a few minutes ago that Harry had arrived. So he couldn't have seen anything except the big room they were standing in right now.

"No, these two nuisances didn't give us a chance to show Harry anything because they tried to pester him to play with them," Severus said while Albus came over to the small group.

"Already out of bed, Severus?" Albus cocked his eyebrow and tilted his head.

"These are my quarters, so I want to be present when Harry moves in. There are a few rules to set, and you cannot expect me to believe that my wife is capable of setting any of the rules I think are necessary."

"Already trying to make me look like a soft mother?" Ivy said teasingly. She didn't seem to be hurt. "So you think I'm not able to set rules?"

"Oh, of course you are capable of setting rules, but they sadly don't match my rules very often. So I just have to make sure that Harry will hear my rules as well, my dear," Severus said sweetly to his wife.

Harry was a little confused. *Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia never spoke like this to one another. Uncle Vernon said something, and Aunt Petunia just did it. They never teased each other, like the two professors were obviously doing right now.* Harry would have to get used to Ivy speaking like that to Professor Snape and that he wouldn't get angry with her for talking back. He was also surprised that Ivy wasn't hurt by what Professor Snape said. Their teasing seemed so relaxed that it was enjoyable to watch them.

"Speaking about rules, Harry, what ones has Madam Pomfrey set up?" Severus asked, to divert attention from the fact that he wasn't allowed out of bed right now. He knew Albus wouldn't let the subject drop quickly if he couldn't distract him.

Harry sighed. He had hoped he didn't have to repeat them in front of all the adults, but they would hear about them from Ivy anyway.

"Just about eating regularly and having a check up each evening." He quickly looked at Ivy.

"And?" Ivy said challengingly.

Harry sighed again. *She seems to have inherited some of the strictness of her mother.* "And an early bed time and naps," he said in a voice that could hardly be heard.

"I can give you Beaver; he can help you sleep," Lysander said sympathetically because he saw that Harry was sad about going to bed early and having to nap.

"And you can have Fox," Eathan said proudly, but then became a little thoughtful and uneasy and quickly added, "for a while ." He was usually the braver one of the twins, but sleeping without his fox plushy scared him.

"Beaver and Fox? Are those your plushies?" Harry asked, happy to divert the attention away from himself.

"Yes, do you want to see them? Do you want to see our room?" Now both boys were bouncing in front of Harry.

"Oh, you two are high on sugar, aren't you? Have you been in Grandpa's office?" Severus asked, pinching the bridge of his nose. Most of the symptoms of his bronchitis were repressed by James' potions, but he still had difficulties breathing freely. He also had a headache and felt a little dizzy and exhausted

The twins looked guiltily up at Albus.

"Yes, they were in my office because their father needed his rest. May I add that he still looks as though he needs rest? Shall I ask James to check on you, or will you go back where you belong without him?" Albus said in a tone that made it clear there was an unspoken message to Severus in his words. Obviously, he didn't want to try to order Severus back into bed in front of the children.

Severus looked at Albus and thought hard about whether he could argue with him, but before he could reply, Ivy was linking her arm with his and addressed her father. "Come on, Dad, it's a big day for all of us, and Severus doesn't want to miss Harry's first tour through the quarters. He already agreed to stay in bed tomorrow to get some more rest."

Severus jerked around, or at least he tried to. Ivy had a tight grip on his arm, and so he could only look sideways at her. "I didn't!"

"Of course you did, darling. You did because you knew that otherwise I would call James to check that your little adventure out of bed didn't have a worsening effect on you. Can't you remember?" Ivy asked sweetly.

"Ivy," Severus said, growling.

"Yes, Severus?" she turned to him so that he could see her face.

One look into her face and Severus knew that it was his last chance to come out of this without getting embarrassed in front of his sons. It was something to get used to: that now there was another son in the room who was, unfortunately, old enough to read between the lines and so knew that they were manipulating him right now. He felt uneasy about it, but when he looked at Harry, he could only see him looking sympathetically back at him. Yeah we have something in common right now. That eased his nerves a little, and he said, "Let's have the tour then."

## Chapter 13 – The Round Tour I

*Chapter 13 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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*Dear readers,*

*Please remember this story is AU! Severus parents are not canon-complaint.*

### **Chapter 13 The Round Tour I**

Harry looked around the living room curiously. Eathan had taken his hand and was looking expectantly up at him. It was obvious that he was very proud of his home and hoped that Harry liked it as well.

"This is the main room of the quarters because from this room you can reach every other room, including our offices," Severus explained.

Harry was still standing near the fireplace through which they had entered his new home only a few minutes before. Or was it more than a few minutes? Harry couldn't remember. He seemed to have lost track of the time completely. Everything was so exciting and also a little scary. Harry was worried that he would do or say something wrong. He didn't want them to realize what a freak he was.

*Living in a family and really being included in it must be something totally different from my 'slave' life with the Dursleys* Professor Snape had already made clear that there would be rules here as well, and Harry hoped he wouldn't break them. From his experiences with the Dursleys, he knew that it was hard for him to avoid this, and he often didn't even know why he broke a rule. *What will happen when I break them? Will they beat me or send me away again?* Before he could wander too far with his thoughts, he was interrupted by Professor Snape's deep voice.

"We have several portraits in this room. Here is Phineas, who is guarding the entrance to Albus' office." Severus pointed at the portrait beside the door on the right side of the big U-shaped living room.

"I saw his portrait in the headmaster's office," Harry said, glad that there was at least something he could say.

"Yes, exactly, Harry," Albus said. "So when you want to speak with me or if you just have to give me a message, you can use this portrait. You can tell Phineas when you want to visit me in my office, and he will tell you if I'm available and let you through. If I'm not able to speak with you at the moment, he will inform me about your request and tell you to wait until I contact you. That's exactly how all the other portraits here, who are leading to one of our offices, work." Albus gestured through the room.

"This one here, next to the entrance door, leads to Minerva's office." Albus pointed at a portrait with a chubby and friendly looking woman in it. She was smiling at Harry, which reminded him that the portraits were listening to the conversation as well.

On the left wall, Harry could see two portraits hanging side by side. Albus led the small group past the couch and a group of armchairs in front of the fireplace, then past the big dinner table opposite it, in the direction of the portraits.

"This is Mary, who leads to my office, Harry," Ivy said, smiling at the young lady in the portrait on the right.

"Nice to meet you, young man," Mary said, giving Harry a friendly smile.

"It's my pleasure," Harry replied politely.

"She is very funny and can tell a lot of stories," Eathan told Harry enthusiastically.

A groan could be heard from the portrait next to Mary's. When Harry looked at the man on the canvas, he could see him rolling his eyes. The man looked a little bit like Filch. "Oh, please, spare me. Every time these little monsters nag her into telling a story, she won't stop for hours, even when they have long left. Really, Severus, how often do I have to beg you to place my portrait somewhere else?"

"*How often* do I have to tell you, Tiberius, that you shall not call my kids monsters?" Severus spat but ended in a coughing fit. That immediately brought him the worried looks of his family members.

"Tiberius, as in Tiberius McMannon? The great Potions master?" Harry said, his eyes big with awe.

Now all eyes were on him, and Tiberius raised his eyebrow in interest. "Oh, please, can it be that your new addition to this family is at least decent in Potions, Severus?"

"Stop this, Tiberius, I have a headache. Just shut up, or I will make you shut up," Severus said, angry about the behavior of his portrait. He had often thought about replacing the portrait with a more friendly, or at least more discreet, portrait, but Tiberius was indeed one of the greatest Potions Masters and the only portrait he could tolerate in his office. Too bad that he had to cope with him privately in the family quarters' side as well.

Thinking about Tiberius' knowledge in Potions made Severus remember Harry's statement, and he faced him. "Yes, it is Tiberius McMannon, and I don't even want to think about why you know him because I fear I will have to give you detention before you have even properly moved in with us."

"Detention?" Harry said, shocked.

"All the books Tiberius has written are only allowed to the advanced classes, and I can't remember any potion of his that you should have even heard about so far," Severus said while eyeing Harry closely.

*Oh, fantastic, I already got myself in trouble. Bad start for me,* Harry thought desperately while trying to find a decent reply. All he could come up with was, "Oh."

"Yes, oh, indeed, but we will speak about this later and also about the influence those red-haired twins have on you," Severus said and shook his head disapprovingly. "Over there is my private lab," Severus stated while gesturing to the door at the end of the small corridor that was at the left end of the U-shaped living room. "We can speak about sharing it on special conditions, after we have spoken about your growing interest in potions," Severus said. He started to grin when he saw Harry's jaw drop open.

"You'd let me use your private lab? I..." He was at a loss of words. *The twins will faint when I tell them.* The feeling he had right now was something totally new. It felt so good. He hadn't felt so happy since the first time he flew with a broom. Using Professor Snape's private lab, and maybe learning more from him outside classes, made Harry grin like crazy. "That's great."

Severus couldn't suppress a proud smile. He had watched Harry with interest as he became better and better in Potions at the end of last year. With a little supervision and a close look at the Weasley twins, Harry could become a very good potions brewer. His little sons hadn't shown much interest in Potions so far. *I had my first Potions kit when I was three, even though I couldn't do much with it.* He had wanted to be like his father, Thadeus Snape, the great Potions master, and would have done anything to gain his respect.

*Eathan and Ly have too many role models in their surroundings to just concentrate on my passion. Eathan is more the active type, who loves to go flying, and he loves Hagrid, with his creatures, and Alastor, with all his mysterious instruments. Lysander is more the thinker. He loves to sit for hours and let people tell him stories or read to him. He's started to show interest in Potions, but Ivy doesn't want me to give him a Potions kit. She thinks it is too dangerous. How dangerous can a kit for a four-year-old boy be? They will soon be five, and then I will try my luck with Ivy again, Severus thought. But now I have another son to share my passion with. Maybe that's a way to get to know him better and hopefully gain his trust.*

"Maybe we can brew some potions for the hospital wing together, Harry," Severus said.

Before he could add anything more, Ivy was at his side again and said warningly, "Or maybe you will think on what James said and stay out of the potions lab for a week."

Severus just rolled his eyes while looking at Harry. When he turned to Ivy, he added, "I didn't say *when* we might brew the potions, did I?" He cocked his eyebrow challengingly.

"No, you didn't, but I could see it in your eyes. If I don't watch you two closely, you will disappear into the lab and never come out again. I know how much you are looking forward to brewing with Harry."

That made Harry's heart jump. When Professor Snape just groaned and didn't complain, Harry said happily, "I'm also looking forward to learning more from you very much, Professor!" Harry had the suspicion that he was smiling from one ear to the other and that it must look very stupid. But he couldn't stop because the feeling that someone was looking forward to spending time with him was so amazing. He felt very special. And this time in a positive way.

"It's Severus in private, Harry. I know it will be a little hard for you, the first time, but you should try to get used to it. We are a family now..." He stumbled when he realized what he had said. "I mean we want to act like a family as long as you live with us. Of course you are still free to choose another family to live with. The guardianship can be canceled from your side whenever you feel the need for it, but we already see you as a son, Harry. So please try to accept our house rules and family habits."

"Yes, sir... ehm... Severus," Harry said while looking at the ground. It felt very odd to call the professors by their first names, but he also felt a lovely warm feeling in his stomach by the words Severus had just said. They saw him as a son, like a part of their family.

Harry didn't know what more to say, and so Ivy said, "Maybe we should go on with our tour," to break the uncomfortable silence. She motioned to the two doors, opposite to each other, at both sides of the small corridor. "These are Albus' and Minerva's bedroom and bathroom." She linked her arm with Harry and led him to the other side of the room again. "Up the stairs is Severus' and my bedroom and bathroom. We are hardly there, just to sleep, but when we are, you are free to come up. You just have to knock at the door and wait until we call you in. This rule counts for all the private rooms, yours as well, Harry. We will accept your privacy, and we also told the twins to do so. I don't know how much experience you have with small children, but they sometimes have problems remembering rules," she said and looked sharply at the twins. "So please be patient, and remind them of the rules when they break them."

"This room is the one which would cause your girlfriend, Ms. Granger, to faint with excitement," Severus said while opening the door next to the portrait of Phineas.

"Hermione isn't my girlfriend," Harry said, shocked, and blushed deeply.

As Ivy maneuvered Harry towards the doorframe, so that he could look inside, she boxed Severus on his arm and glared at him.



Severus just grinned. *She couldn't expect me to resist the opportunity to mock Harry on this one.*

"Girlfriend or not, she will pester you until you let her in. Just take care that you and she, or any other child you come in here with, don't touch the books from row four onwards. They are not warded, but we expect that you won't look at them because they are for adults. You can be sure that I will find out if you look at any of them without our permission," Severus said warningly.

Harry tried to memorize this rule by adding it to the list he had made in his mind.

"You can use the library as a work-place if you like. Many of the books will be helpful for your homework," Ivy explained and pointed at the big table with four chairs around it. "And you have much more space here than on your desk in your room, so when you want to study with your friends, this will be the best place for it."

"Okay," Harry said and moved out of the doorway, back into the living room.

"Now, let's have a look at the most important part for you, Harry," Ivy said, smiling.

## Chapter 14 – The Round Tour II

*Chapter 14 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

*Disclaimer: All recognizable characters belong to J.K. Rowling, and I am not earning anything by writing this story.*

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### Chapter 14 The Round Tour II

Now Eathan and Lysander were in full action again. They grabbed Harry's arms and pulled him eagerly to the corridor beside the stairs. They passed a big cupboard in which Harry assumed the brooms the boys wanted to show him earlier were stored and then reached the part behind the stairs. This corridor was a little bigger than the one on the other side. The twins were pulling him past two doors that were positioned opposite to each other and dragged him to the room on the front wall of the corridor.

Soon Harry found himself surrounded by a lot of toys. The walls of the room were painted very colorfully and had moving objects painted on them. One wall was covered with a meadow and some trees. Birds and insects were flying around on it, and the sun was standing very low, looking calm. *Maybe it is enchanted to change according to the time of day*, Harry thought while looking at the wall in awe.

"These are the Chudley Cannons," Eathan said while pointing at the flying Quidditch player on the wall on the other side of the room.

Harry laughed. "I know. I have a poster of them."

"They're the best team," Eathan said proudly.

"Oh, yes, they are. You really have to show this wall to my friend Ron." Harry's lovely, happy feeling vanished abruptly. He could feel his chest tighten and negative thoughts were trying to suppress the good ones he had gained in the last few minutes.

Lysander felt the change in Harry's mood immediately; he took Harry's hand and then looked to his mother for help.

Harry could feel Lysander's hand in his and the tense silence in the room. He had the feeling he needed to cry and tried very hard to push it away. He didn't want to lose control again. Now less than ever. It was embarrassing enough that James and Ivy had seen him like the weak freak he was; he couldn't stand it if the others saw it as well. His breath became quicker, and he knew he would lose the battle soon. Ivy's hand was on his shoulder, and her voice was speaking softly, but he could hardly hear, let alone understand her meaning. It couldn't help him win the battle. Only when a bigger and heavier hand was placed on his other shoulder did he feel his surroundings slowly coming into focus again. He could now understand Ivy's words; she was telling him to relax and that everything would be okay soon, that he would reconcile with Ron.

Harry realized that the heavy hand and the flow of magic that went from it into his body belonged to Albus. He took some quick, panicked breaths but could only breathe better and more calmly when Albus increased the amount of soothing magic he was sending into him.

"It's okay, Harry, try to breathe very slowly and deeply. There is no reason to panic," Albus said calmly.

*Oh, Merlin, I screwed it up*, Harry thought, devastated. He wanted to be in control again, so he did what Albus told him. When he closed his eyes, he managed to take some deep breaths. He wanted to apologize, "I..." but the words didn't come out. And when a sob escaped him, he just wanted to run away and hide.

His eyes were still closed when he heard footsteps coming near him.

"Come on, Harry, drink your potion!" Severus said while taking Harry's free right hand and carefully placing a vial in it. "You know it will help you to relax."

Harry would have given anything just to escape the embarrassing situation as soon as possible.

Albus could feel Harry relax after he had taken the potion and slowed the calming magic flow. He let his hand remain on Harry's shoulder to give him one more anchor to reality.

Ivy took the empty vial out of Harry's hand.

When Harry opened his eyes again, he looked straight into the concerned face of Severus.

"Better?" Severus asked while taking a close look at Harry's eyes to see if he was fully back in reality.

"Yes, thanks," he said, blushing deeply and looking down at the floor. While he did this, his glance fell on his left hand, locked onto the small hand of Lysander. With shock, he realized that he was squeezing it hard. He let go of it immediately and tried to back away. "I'm sorry, oh, Merlin, I'm sorry."

Albus shifted his hand when he felt Harry stumble backwards, and now he was grabbing him by his upper arm to prevent Harry from falling over. "Easy, Harry, calm down. Everything is okay."

"Yeah, Harry, it's okay. I'm fine, look!" Lysander said and waved with his hand.

Harry calmed down again. The rush of adrenalin had given the potion the last boost it needed to kick in completely. The heavy feeling on his chest vanished, and he felt much lighter now. As if the earth's gravity didn't have as much effect on him as it normally did. He could still remember what caused the panic attack, but he couldn't understand why it had affected him that much. He could think about Ron now without panicking. *Why wasn't that possible before?*

"You haven't seen my wall, Harry," Lysander said to distract Harry. He really liked Harry and didn't want him to feel bad. "Look!" He pointed at the wall on the side opposite to the door where a window was. It was painted in blue. Golden stars were spread on it, and between them a white unicorn ran and a white owl flew with it. "Grandma said you have an owl like this. Does it have a name?"

"Hedwig," Harry said, still a little dreamy from the potion. "I can show her to you tomorrow if you want."

"Yes!" Lysander said happily.

"Me, too?" Eathan said in a small voice. He was unsure if his wall was responsible for Harry's problems and so feared that Harry was mad at him now.

Harry felt the tension and the worry of Eathan. He knew very well the feeling of being scared of being responsible for something from his time with the Dursleys. "Of course, you too. Hedwig wants to get to know both of my new brothers."

"Yeah!" Both boys shouted and started to dance around each other in excitement.

Harry had to smile at this, and the noises didn't let him hear the long restrained breaths that the adults in the room let out when they realized that the twins had helped Harry to feel better again.

Ivy regained her composure first and said, "Yes, but this wasn't the room I meant by the most important part for Harry, boys. Come on, show him your bathroom and then finally his own room."

Again, Harry had one twin at each hand, dragging him through the corridor. First they showed him the bathroom. It was medium sized and had a shower, a bathtub, a toilet and a sink. It was covered with beige tiles which made it look very clean, but still very warm.

Minerva moved behind Harry and laid a hand on his shoulder. "It is a child-proof bathroom, Harry. We cannot lower the wards for you, but you will get used to them."

"Child-proof?" Harry asked in confusion before Minerva had the chance to explain it more clearly.

"That means no sharp things, Harry. So when you start shaving," Severus said and let his hand brush over Harry's chin, "we will have to make other arrangements." Seeing Severus grin was something Harry definitely had to get used to first.

Harry felt his chin as well, just to see if Severus could have felt anything and to memorize the touch of the professor. He remembered how he had held him in front of the infirmary and felt the warm and safe feeling it had given him again. To Harry's disappointment, there wasn't anything to be felt on his chin. All the boys tested it from time to time and compared their private parts and amount of hair in the shower. Harry had been very proud when he had seen the first hairs, but he hadn't gained much lately. Ron was much luckier than he. Again Harry realized that he could think about Ron now without getting a bad feeling in his chest. *This potion is really magic.*

Seeing the disappointed look on Harry's face, Severus chuckled and ruffled Harry's hair. "If it doesn't start growing soon, we will see if a fine shave won't convince your body to start with it."

Harry's eyes sparkled in pleasant anticipation. Ron's dad didn't let him try to shave his face with his older brothers. *He will die from jealousy*, Harry thought proudly.

"We want to shave, too," Eathan said to his father and looked up at him hopefully.

"No, that is just something for your older brother," Severus said while scooping his son up in his arms.

Eathan leaned into his father's chest. He was really tired; the day was so exciting. He had a new brother now, and tomorrow they would do so many great things with him.

"I fear we are fast past your bedtime, my boys. Just let us have a look at Harry's room, and then we will put you two to bed," Severus said, chuckling gently.

That no protest came from his little sons made Severus realize that they were really tired, so he didn't put Eathan down but just carried him in his arms to the room opposite the bathroom.

All the adults made room for Harry to open the door and go in, but he was too nervous. Harry was glad when Lysander took his hand again and led him into the room.

It was smaller than the twins' room, but still very big for Harry's taste. Directly opposite the door was a big window, and a big bed was standing at that wall, slightly to the left of the window. In the right corner, arranged on the side wall, were a desk and some shelves. A big cupboard for clothes was positioned to the left of the door. *Oh my, I don't even have enough clothes to fill one drawer with.* On the left wall stood a wall unit for who knows what. *Dudley had one of these for his toys, but what should I use it for?* *This room is too big.* Near his bed stood his trunk. It was still closed.

"Your broom is already in the broom cupboard in the corridor. If you like, you can place Hedwig's cage here and let her live with you, but I think she will enjoy the company of the other birds more than spending her days and nights here. It's your decision. For us it is okay either way," Ivy said.

Harry was speechless.

"Maybe we should let Harry unpack and put these two into bed now," Severus said, to give Harry some time to adjust with the new situation. "We will check on you in half an hour, okay?"

"Kay," Harry said, still in shock. He could hear the door close and now was standing alone in the middle of the big room. *His room.*

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Please review!

# Chapter 15 – Paul

Chapter 15 of 32

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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**Dear Readers,**

*In this chapter, I will announce that there is the possibility that Severus could spank Harry. I'm definitely against corporal punishment, but I think that Severus would be one to think it is necessary for special occasions. I plan on writing one chapter where it will happen. It won't be a hard spanking or with anything else than Severus' hand. I need this for the plot, so if you have a problem with it, I thought it would be fair to tell you ahead. I will make a special warning to this particular chapter/part so that you could even skip over it, but as I said, it is important for my plot because something will happen during the spanking. That means it could be a little confusing if you skip over it, but you will be able to catch up with the plot again nevertheless. It's still some time until that happens. Please refrain from begging me to leave it out!*

*I hope you like this chapter nevertheless.*

*Sunny*

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## Chapter15 Paul

Harry had already arranged his few belongings when Severus and Ivy came back. He had placed all his schoolbooks on the shelf next to his desk. The Chudley Cannons poster still lay unrolled on the wall unit because Harry didn't know how to glue it on the wall. His clothes looked very lost in the big cupboard, and the empty wall unit also looked weird.

When Ivy and Severus entered the room, Harry was sitting on his bed. Severus pulled Harry's desk chair in front of the bed while Ivy sat down beside Harry.

Harry observed that Severus, who had sat down in the chair, looked very exhausted. "You look awful, Professor."

"Thank you very much, Harry. *And* it is still Severus," he said, and immediately, his body was shaken by a coughing fit.

"Sorry, Severus, but you really look ill. Madam Pomfrey and James will find out that you haven't rested." Harry was worried that Severus would get into trouble just because he had shown him the quarters.

"Even if I do get into trouble, it will be my problem and not yours, Harry. So you don't have to worry." His breath was rasping, and he slumped even more in the chair than before.

"We will retire to bed in a few minutes, Harry," Ivy said, laying a hand on his leg. "We just wanted to see if you are okay or if you needed something."

"And to set the most important rules, Ivy," Severus added while straightening up in the chair. "We don't expect that you will follow all the rules immediately. It will take some time for you to get used to them and remember them. But we have two very important rules, the family rules. These are: 'Don't hurt someone else or yourself on purpose or expose them or yourself to danger', and 'Don't lie! If you are in trouble, have a problem, feel unwell or whatever, we want you to tell us. Don't lie to us. These rules are very important to us, Harry."

"What happens when I break them?" Harry asked, but seeing Severus raise his eyebrow, he quickly added, "Not that I plan to, I just would like to know. Do you beat your children? Or do you lock them somewhere?"

"No, I don't beat my children." Severus tried hard to suppress the anger he felt at Harry's assumption. "But breaking the first rule will find you over my lap. A spanking is not the same as a beating. I really hope that we never have to go through this, but if you hurt someone or yourself on purpose, I will take you over my knee to make sure you understand how important this rule is."

"Spanking with a belt?" Harry asked. For him it was normal that he would be punished, and he just wanted to know what to expect. He hadn't expected that in this family there wouldn't be punishments. Even Ron's parents spanked him from time to time, and the Weasleys were the role model family *par excellence* for Harry. He couldn't know how much he unsettled Severus with this topic.

Severus had thought long about how to handle Harry when it came to punishment. In the end, he had decided to treat him the same as his other sons. If he broke the first family rule, he would get spanked in addition to other penalties. Harry would realize that a spanking out of worry was something totally different to a beating like he had gotten from his uncle. "Of course not with a belt, boy, I'm not the monster you obviously presume me to be. With my hand and nothing more." Severus didn't want to speak about this topic. He really hoped that the situation would never arise, even though he knew that the chance was very small, since Harry seemed to attract trouble magically.

Finally, Harry realized how unpleasant the topic was for Severus. "I don't think you are a monster. I just wanted to know what I have to expect. I'm sorry." He lowered his eyes because he couldn't look into Severus' hurt face any longer.

"You are both in no condition to discuss things like this," Ivy said while squeezing Harry's leg sympathetically. "I think we all need our sleep now. Albus and Minerva have already retired and assigned us to say good night to you for them."

"Normally, we all eat breakfast together at 6:30 am and supper at 6:00 pm, but as long as you are not allowed to attend classes, you don't have to get up that early to eat with us. Please, try to get up by at least 9:30 to eat breakfast according to Poppy's order. You just have to call for Twinky, our family house-elf. She will bring you something to eat. This week Severus will be here over the day as well, so you won't be alone. You already know where our bedroom is and can find him if you need something. Remember that you can send us messages through our office portraits, as well. Do you have any questions, Harry?"

"What about Eathan and Lysander?" Harry asked.

"They leave for day care at 7:00 am and come back at 4:00 pm. Oh, and before I forget, when you leave the quarters, please let at least one of us know. If none of us are present, contact us through our portraits. For this week, James wants you to stay in the quarters completely. He wants to show you how to handle the calming potion correctly before you leave the quarters," Ivy explained. "Any more questions?"

Harry shook his head. He was tired and just wanted to go to sleep.

"Okay, then we will say goodnight, Harry. You will find all that you need in the bathroom," Ivy said, standing up and taking his face in her hands to place a kiss on his forehead.

Severus dragged himself out of the chair and waved it over to the desk again. "Goodnight, Harry," he said while patting Harry's head tiredly.

"Night," Harry replied the moment the adults passed the doorframe.

---

Harry looked around the bathroom to find his old toothbrush. He couldn't see it, but on the small shelf above the sink were standing three beakers with toothbrushes. One of the beakers had 'HARRY' scribbled on it in big red and green letters. *It seems the twins have painted it for me*, Harry thought, amused, and grinned. Then he took the beaker and the toothbrush to brush his teeth.

When he was finished, he turned to leave the room. Before he reached the door, it closed with a loud thud, and Harry jumped in surprise *What the hell...* he thought, trying to open the door desperately.

"Shower, toilet, hairbrush!" a demanding voice echoed through the bathroom. It sounded a little bit like Professor McGonagall, and so Harry turned around abruptly to check if she was standing in the bathroom.

But there wasn't anyone. He was alone. "What?" Harry asked into the empty room.

"Shower, toilet, hairbrush!" the voice repeated.

Harry pulled out his wand and pointed it at the door. "*Alohomora*."

Nothing happened. "Damn!" he shouted.

"Any problems, Master Harry?"

Harry turned around, still holding his wand, which now pointed at a house-elf. An odd-looking house-elf to be honest. He was wearing a suit, and his few hairs were combed into a center part. Harry stared at the creature with his mouth wide open.

"I asked if there are any problems, Master Harry?" the elf said in a tone that was a little too bossy for a house-elf.

"Who are you?" Harry asked, puzzled. He had never seen nor heard about an elf like this.

"I'm Paul, the educational house-elf," the creature explained, as if he was speaking with a small child. "Do you have any problems, Master Harry? Can I help you with something?"

"Yes, the door is closed. I can't open it." Harry turned again to the door and tried the handle to open it. Still the door remained closed.

"Of course it is. It is locked until you do what the room demands. Didn't the room explain it to you?"

"Explain... the room... no." Harry was confused. "It said something about shower, toilet and hairbrush or something."

"Oh, so you at least brushed your teeth. That's something," the elf said dryly.

Harry's jaw dropped again at this statement.

Seeing that the boy was staring at him, Paul added, "The room observes that all the children in these quarters brush their teeth, use the toilet, shower and comb their hair before they go to bed. It also will ensure that you are doing the same in the morning, except for the shower." Paul explained all this as if it was the most normal thing in the world.

"The dormitory bathrooms never did anything like this," Harry said, still dumbfounded.

"Yes, but this isn't the dormitory bathroom, Master Harry."

Harry looked around the room, annoyed. "I'm just tired, and I don't have to go to the toilet. Don't you think I'm old enough to know this?"

"It doesn't matter what I think, Master Harry. When the room thinks you need to do something, then you have to fulfill its wishes. Do you have a problem with going to the toilet, Master Harry?"

"Of course not," Harry said, shocked and already starting to feel heat creep into his cheeks. "I will go to the toilet... when you have left. I'm just tired, and so I wanted to shower tomorrow."

"You are still ill, Master Harry. When you are feeling too tired, I can inform Master Severus and Mistress Ivy. If they allow me, I can force the room to open for you without you having a shower."

"No!" Harry almost screamed. When he was sure the elf wouldn't Disapparate, he added more calmly, "No, it won't be necessary. I will just have a quick shower. You don't have to disturb them because of me." Harry didn't want to make trouble about something stupid like a shower. It wouldn't hurt to shower, comb his hair and use the toilet, even if he thought it wasn't necessary.

"Master Severus and Mistress Ivy have made abundantly clear that they want to be informed when you feel unwell or are having problems. They won't feel disturbed by asking them to release you from the shower. I just can't force the room to open without their permission, Master Harry," the elf said while eyeing Harry closely.

"No, it's really not necessary, Paul. They have just retired to bed, and it won't hurt me to take a shower. Really!"

"As you wish, Master Harry. You will find fresh pajamas on the sideboard next to the shower when you are finished. If you need something or feel unwell, just call for me." With that he vanished.

Harry let out the breath he had held for some time without noticing. *Whining about taking a shower and going to the toilet. What a great start*, he thought, embarrassed.

He took a quick shower, and while he brushed his hair, the room breathed warm air on his head to dry it.

Now only the toilet was left. He opened the lid and lowered his pajama pants. Suddenly Harry felt an invisible hand smack him on his bottom, and the room said, "Sit down!"

The smack wasn't hard, but it had come out of nowhere and surprised Harry. He was lucky that this hadn't caused an embarrassing accident. Inwardly, he had to grin while sitting on the seat. *Does this happen to Professor Snape and Professor Dumbledore as well when they try to pee standing?* It was definitely worth trying it in one of the other bathrooms soon.

When Harry finally was back in his bedroom, he fell asleep the moment his head touched the cushion.

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Please review!

## Chapter 16 – Problems Again

*Chapter 16 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 16 Problems Again

"Master Harry, Master Harry!"

"Uhhh." Harry turned around. He hadn't slept that well in ages, and he didn't want it to end now. *No lying awake for hours, no nightmare, no waking up in the middle of the night with no hope of going to sleep again. That must be heaven.*

"Master Harry has to get up!"

Harry groaned and turned, still with closed eyes, in the direction of the annoying voice. When he opened his eyes, he feared his heart would stop beating from shock because only inches from his face were hovering two big eyes. When Harry's eyes focused on the ugly face in front of him, he recognized Paul. *Definitely not heaven. There is no chance that creatures like this live in heaven.*

"What?" Harry asked, still struggling to fully awaken.

"Master Harry has to get up and eat breakfast. It's 9:45, and Mistress said you should eat by 9:30, Master Harry. That means you are already late!" Paul reprimanded Harry.

"Sorry, Paul, I'll get up now," Harry mumbled and tossed the bed covers back.

"Twinky will serve breakfast in the living room, Master Harry. Come down when you have..."

"Used the toilet, combed your hair and brushed your teeth. Yes, yes, I remember," Harry grumbled, annoyed.

"You forgot 'washed your face,' Master Harry," Paul said dryly, as if he hadn't noticed Harry's rebellious tone. Without another word, he vanished with a pop.

Harry tried to find some casual clothing, but all he had, except for his school robes, were Dudley's old clothes, and he didn't want to wear them here. So he decided to wear his school robes again. With the robes and fresh...as fresh as Dudley's old oversize briefs could be...underwear under his arm, he headed for the bathroom.

*I hope Paul hasn't told anyone about the bathroom problems yesterday.* Harry had no intention of repeating it, and so he did all that he thought the room wanted him to do, but when he tried to leave, the door was locked again.

"Salve!" The room demanded.

"What?" Harry asked, less annoyed than surprised that he had forgotten something.

"Salve on the top of the cabinet!"

Harry looked for whatever the room was talking about and recognized the salve Madam Pomfrey had given him on the cabinet. "Oh, I forgot, sorry!" Realizing what he was doing, he blushed. *Fantastic, now I'm speaking with a room and even apologizing to it.*

He removed his robes and the old worn-out shirt under them and applied the salve on the fading wounds on his back, chest and stomach. Relieved that he could leave the room now, he threw the salve on the top of the cabinet again and banged into the door in his attempt to open it. Now he really was annoyed. "What more?" he asked angrily.

"Salve!"

"I have already applied it!" Harry shouted.

A pop was heard, and Harry didn't have to turn to know that Paul had appeared again.

"Problems again, Master Harry?"

Harry closed his eyes and tried to control himself. "Yes!" Harry hissed and turned around to face the annoying house-elf.

Paul was smiling arrogantly at him.

"This damn room is demanding I should apply the salve, but I already did. It's not my problem that it didn't see me applying it."

"Of course the room saw you applying the salve, Master Harry. Maybe you haven't done it correctly?" Paul said dryly.

"Not done it correctly? What the hell can someone do wrong while applying salve?"

"Language, Master Harry. Master Severus sets a high value on language. No cursing and no screaming, Master Harry!"

"I'm no baby. You don't have to tell me this!" Harry said, hot-tempered.

A bang at the door made Harry jump and turn. "Then don't behave like one, and do what he tells you, Harry. Your tea is getting cold. Do you want me to come in and help you?" Harry recognized the voice of Professor Snape even when it was very hoarse, as it was at the moment.

He didn't want to sound like a whining child, but he already felt desperate because he feared he would never be allowed to leave this room. He didn't understand what the room wanted from him. "I'm sorry, sir." He felt stupid speaking with his new guardian through the closed door.

"It's Severus, not sir, and you didn't answer my question. Do you want me to help you with the room?" Severus said calmly. He knew that it would take some time for Harry to adjust to the room. He had had one like this as a child, and he had hated it as well. It was very helpful with the twins but couldn't adjust for age, so Harry would have to learn to accept it.

"Yes, please, sir... Severus," Harry answered in such a small voice that Severus almost didn't catch it.

"You can leave, Paul, thank you," Severus said politely as he entered the room. The elf vanished immediately.

Harry looked at the floor, feeling embarrassed that he couldn't handle the situation on his own.

"So, what is the problem, Harry?" Severus asked patiently.

"I did everything the room said, I swear. I applied the salve and it still didn't let me out," Harry explained. He feared that Severus wouldn't believe him and that he would get into trouble. He shifted nervously from one foot to the other.

"If you have done everything the room and Paul said, why are you so nervous?" Severus asked, eyeing Harry closely.

That made Harry panic. "I swear I did! Please, you must believe me!" he shouted desperately.

"Calm down, Harry. I believe you. I know that it will take you some time to understand what the room wants you to do. Paul can be a little smart-alecky and bossy, but you should try to accept him as a helping hand and not an annoying educator. He would have explained what you have to do, if you had let him. So next time, control your temper and let him explain, okay?"

"Yes, Severus," Harry said and blushed.

Severus had to smirk at Harry's behavior, but was glad that for the first time Harry had remembered to address him as Severus. "Okay...now let's find out what the problem is. So, what exactly did the room say?"

"It just said 'salve,' but I already did that," Harry said while pointing at the squeezed tube of salve on the top of the cabinet.

Severus picked up the tube. "Maybe it wasn't applied correctly. Remove your robes and let me see."

"What?" Harry asked, shocked.

"I have seen you naked in the hospital wing, Harry. Don't tell me you are embarrassed. We are both men, anyway," Severus said dryly and raised an eyebrow.

Harry removed his robes very quickly and pulled off the old shirt so that Severus wouldn't see how damaged it already was.

"Why are you wearing your robes anyway? You won't attend classes, so more casual clothing is fine." Looking questioningly at the disrobing child, Severus saw that Harry tried to hide the shirt from him. "And what is this?" He grabbed for the shirt and was surprised that Harry tried to hide it behind his back.

"Nothing, sir. Just a shirt," Harry said fearfully.

Severus rolled his eyes at the formal address again, but decided to ignore it this time. "Don't be childish, Harry. Give it to me!"

Harry placed the hated shirt in Severus' outstretched hand. His cheeks were burning, and he felt even worse when he saw the disgusted look on Severus' face.

Severus held the shirt away from himself with his fingertips and then tossed it in the dustbin. "Do all your casual clothes look like this?"

"Yes, sir. They are Dudley's old ones." Harry said this more to the floor than to Severus. *Fantastic, now they will realize what a burden I am.* "I have money, sir, and as soon as James allows me, I will buy new clothes. I promise."

"As your guardians, we are responsible for your financial holdings in Gringotts, and we have sealed your vault until you become of age. You can use your money for your education then. Until you are of age, we will take care of everything you need. We will go shopping as soon as James gives his okay. Until then... Twinky?"

A house-elf, this time one that really looked like the ones Harry was used to, appeared. "Master Severus has called Twinky? What can Twinky do for Master Severus?"

"Bring a shirt..." he eyed Harry head to toe, "...jeans, socks and boxers from my cupboard."

"Yes, Master!" Only seconds after Twinky had vanished, she appeared again, this time loaded with the demanded clothes.

"Thank you, Twinky. Please make sure that the tea downstairs won't get cold."

Again, Harry was taken aback by Severus' politeness to the elf, but he had other things on his mind now.

Severus placed the clothes on the sideboard and came over to Harry again. "So, let's see." He grabbed Harry's arm and turned him sideways.

Harry could feel Severus' hand stroking over his back and the wounds there. It was awkward, but Harry resisted the urge to lean into the touch. *Merlin, you are such a baby that you want someone to rub your back*, he admonished himself.

While Harry still was fighting with himself, Severus had started to stroke over the wounds on Harry's chest and stomach as well. "It seems you have applied it correctly."

"Like I said," Harry said, happy that Severus believed him.

"Remove your trousers, Harry," Severus said, as if it were the most natural thing to say right now.

"Sir?" Harry said, hoping Severus didn't mean what he had just said.

"Harry, please. I'm tired, and I don't look forward to get caught outside my bedroom by James or whoever is sure to come in soon. As I already said, I saw you naked in the hospital wing, and you had quite some welts on your bum and legs, so I am sure that there must have been a problem applying the salve to them," he said, a little annoyed

but trying to stay calm and friendly.

Harry didn't want Severus to get annoyed or mad at him, so he started to fumble nervously with the buttons on his trousers. He was glad when Severus turned away from him and went over to the sideboard.

*Oh, Merlin, this will take quite some work if he stays this shy and easy to embarrass* Severus thought. To let Harry have a little more privacy, he decided to look through the clothes Twinky had brought. *Yes, they will do for today.* A wave of his wand, and the clothes shrank a little. When he turned, he saw that Harry was standing, almost completely naked and barefoot, in the middle of the bathroom. He still had his gray briefs on but nevertheless tried to hide his crotch behind his hands.

"Merlin, Harry, you don't have anything I haven't seen before," he said, rolling his eyes and coming over to Harry again. Without waiting for any reply from Harry, he again tilted him sideways and lowered his briefs. Harry let out a squeak, but didn't try to squirm away. One look at the red welts made it clear that Harry hadn't applied any salve there. "I think we have found the problem, Harry."

"Hmmpf," Harry mumbled.

Severus had to chuckle at this reaction. He took the salve from the sink and applied it to the wounds on Harry's bum and legs. "Okay, done, and you are still living, aren't you?"

"Yes," Harry said shyly. It wasn't so bad to let Severus do this, but it was still awkward. Uncle Vernon wouldn't even think about touching him with his hands and certainly not on his bum. *But Severus doesn't seem to have any problem with it; maybe he doesn't think I'm filthy.* Harry felt a little bit like one of the twins now.

He had pulled up his worn-out briefs again and, funnily enough, didn't feel awkward standing in front of Severus in his briefs any longer. He didn't even try to cover his crotch again.

Severus had placed the salve on the cabinet again and now had the boxers in his hand. "They are also second hand, but I would say they aren't as worn as yours. It's up to you, Harry. If you prefer to wear the briefs until we get something new for you, it's okay with me."

"No, please, I would like to wear yours." Harry wondered how it would feel to wear boxers like those. They looked cool; black silken boxers.

"Okay." Severus handed Harry the boxers and turned to the sink, as if he was interested in something there, just to give Harry the privacy he so obviously needed.

Harry almost fell while he clumsily tried to change from his briefs into the boxers as fast as possible.

When Severus felt Harry go still again, he turned and offered him the rest of the clothes. "I tried to make them the right size, but I'm not Ivy. I swear she can look at you from head to toe and know all your clothing sizes. But, men as we are, we'll just have to make them fit on your body after you have put them on. Not the best way, but it will suffice for now."

It felt good when Severus spoke with him as if they were both equal even when it was just the gender. It was like yesterday when he had spoken about shaving. To have something in common with Severus made Harry feel normal and special at the same moment.

When Harry was completely dressed, Severus resized the clothes.

"Ehm... can you make it a little more loose?" Harry asked shyly when he felt the jeans cling to him snugly, like a second skin.

"Oh, I forgot about the teenage style." Severus waved his wand and enlarged the jeans so that they started to slip over Harry's hips and reveal his boxers.

"Not that much, Severus!" Harry said, shocked, and grabbed for the waistband to pull it up higher. When he looked at Severus, he saw him grinning.

"No?" Severus asked, playing surprised. "I thought that was the new style."

*He is joking.* Harry thought with surprise, *No Gryffindor will believe me when I tell them about this.* "Very funny."

When Severus turned to the door, he could hear Harry taking in a breath, almost stumbling over the oversize jeans when he tried to follow him.

"Severus, please," Harry pleaded, trying not to trip over the too-long legs of the jeans.

Without turning, Severus waved his wand and Harry's jeans were resized again, this time exactly how Harry wanted them to fit. *So he really was joking,* Harry thought and couldn't suppress a grin. He let his hand wander over his shirt. *I feel more like a Snape now than a Potter.* He had to smile about that. *And it feels good.*

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Please review!

## Chapter 17 - Breakfast

Chapter 17 of 32

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 17 - Breakfast

Severus had sat down at the table and was opening the *Daily Prophet*, again to the page he'd last read before he had gone looking for Harry.

Harry sat down at the head of the table opposite Severus. Twinky appeared directly beside him and asked, "What does Master Harry want to eat?"

"Ehm..." Harry had no idea what he should order. He wasn't a morning person and never liked breakfast. At the Dursleys' he always had to cook for the rest of the 'family' and lost all his appetite while doing it. He was always glad when they couldn't stand him sitting at their table and sent him out after he had served them. Here at Hogwarts, he only went to breakfast in the Great Hall because his friends were doing it. Hermione always scolded him for eating such a small amount of food.

*I have to say something before Snape, no, Severus scolds me for not being able to decide.* He carefully looked at Severus and saw him lower his newspaper. *Damn, decide on something, Harry, he ordered himself mentally.* "I don't know. What could I have, Twinky?"

Out of the corner of his eye, Harry saw that Severus had lowered the newspaper almost completely onto the table and was watching him now.

"Whatever you want, Master Harry," Twinky said, a little confused.

*Fantastic, that doesn't help me at all,* Harry thought, annoyed. "I don't know. I'm not very hungry."

"Remember what Madam Pomfrey said, Harry. You don't want to let her or James find out that you haven't eaten properly. Crossing them on your first day out of the infirmary wouldn't be a good move," Severus explained.

*It didn't sound as if he was scolding me. More as if he could understand me and just wanted to give me good advice.* Harry thought, confused. "Maybe cereal and some juice." Harry looked uncertainly at the cup of tea in front of him and then looked shyly at Severus. "Or do I have to drink this?" He was grimacing because he hated tea.

"Yes, you have to. It's spiked with a calming draught." Seeing Harry's shocked face, he quickly added, "Just a slight calming draught and if it helps, I had to take it as well. It's James' concoction, and it's not so bad. Just try it. If you don't like it, or think it affects you too much or in a bad way, you can tell James later. He will come and check on you and will surely be open to complaints. If it is only the tea that troubles you, we shall have to ask James if it can be mixed with something else. But I cannot promise you that it will be possible."

Harry felt as if he had to take at least a sip of the tea to show that he understood. He grabbed for the cup and took a careful sip. It tasted sweet, like honey. Not something he would prefer to drink every day, but it was okay. "It's sweet."

"Mine wasn't, so I think James added some honey to yours. So it isn't that bad, right?"

"It's still tea, and I hate tea. Dudley was always allowed to..." Harry drew in a sharp breath and started to blush. *Why did I start to tell Severus about Dudley? God, I don't even want to think about the Dursleys any longer.*

Severus was eying Harry closely. "I would like to hear what you wanted to tell me, Harry. You don't have to feel embarrassed."

"It's nothing. Only boring stuff from my time with the Dursleys. Really nothing that you would want to hear me whining about," Harry said in a rush, hoping Severus would let it drop.

"Harry... Harry!" Severus called his name twice in the hope that Harry would look at him, but Harry just stared at his cup of tea. "Harry, please look at me." Severus cringed and scolded himself for letting this request sound like a command, but at least Harry was looking at him now.

"When you feel uncomfortable talking with me about your relatives or what happened at your old home, it is okay. I only ask you not to play it down. You can tell me everything that happened, but you also can decide not to do so. The only thing I ask is that you just say, 'I don't want to speak about it,' and not tell me that I wouldn't be interested because that isn't true." Severus had forced himself to speak more gently, as gently as it was possible for him.

Harry felt uneasy. "I just wanted to say that Dudley, my cousin, was always allowed to drink cola or juice, and I had to drink water or tea after they had found out how much I hate it." Harry was looking at his cup again and decided to gulp it down in one, so that he didn't have to think about it any longer.

"We will speak with James about using a different substance in which to mix your calming draught," Severus stated and raised his newspaper again. He was already hidden behind it when he added, "But there will be no cola here, either. Two sons high on sugar because of their sweet-addicted grandfather are enough for me. I am definitely too old to handle a teenager high on sugar and caffeine as well."

"It was worth a try, but juice would be great as well," Harry said, grinning when he remembered Eathan's performance yesterday. Then his gaze fell on the small creature beside him. "Oh, I'm sorry, Twinky. I totally forgot you. Yeah, uh, I think I will take juice and cereal, please."

"As you wish, Master Harry," Twinky said and popped away.

"Ehm, Severus?" Harry accosted his companion.

"Yes, Harry?" Severus lowered his newspaper again and grabbed for his own cup of tea.

"Shouldn't you be in bed?"

Severus set his cup back on the table and glared at Harry. "Shouldn't you remember who is the adult in this room?"

"Maybe he would if you would behave like an adult, Severus." James had stepped into the room through the fireplace.

"It is beyond my grasp why we lowered our wards for you to step in whenever you want," Severus said, to warn James that he didn't want to be scolded in front of Harry. *As if I would have any chance that he would spare me a scolding.*

"Maybe it's because you normally trust me and only seem to change your mind when you are ill. So, can you tell me why you are out of bed?" He made his way over to the table. When his eye fell on Harry, he said in a friendly tone, "Hello, Harry, I hope you slept well."

"Yes, Healer Smith," Harry said, and jumped, startled, when Twinky appeared with his breakfast.

"Just James will do, Harry." He looked at his watch and asked, "A little late for breakfast, isn't it? Are you sure you rested well?" He came over to Harry and felt his forehead.

Harry was irritated by this attention. He would have preferred it if James' attention had stayed on Severus. "No, really, I slept well. Maybe too well, so I had problems getting up." He looked at James to show him that he was telling the truth.

"That's good to hear. Now eat, you have to gain some weight," James ordered and then turned to face his other patient again.

"Don't think I forgot my last question to you, Severus. So, why are you out of bed?" He went over to Severus, who had already tried to straighten up.

"I'm out of bed because I feel well enough to be so, *Healer Smith,*" Severus spat, and forced himself not to flinch away when James took his wrist with one hand and laid the other on his forehead.

"Oh, really, Severus. Then let the doctor see for himself whether you really are so healthy." James let his hands stay where they were and pushed Severus' head a little



backwards to look into his eyes.

Severus gulped but tried to hide behind his mask of annoyance. "As you can feel, my temperature is down, and I'm not tired."

"Yes, I can feel that. And I also can see in your eyes that you have taken one of your own potions to gain these results, Severus. If you prefer to tell me about this in private and not here, then I would suggest you go to bed now and wait until I come to check on you. If you want to stay, we will just discuss it here, and we both know how this will end," James said warningly and let go of Severus' head.

"Yes, yes," Severus said, annoyed, but he knew better to push James too far. "Can I have my wrist back? Otherwise it will be hard for me to go to the bedroom." He tried to jerk his hand away.

James was still looking deep into Severus' eyes, and when Severus tried to pull his hand out of his grip, he tightened it instead and looked warningly at Severus. During his time as a spy, Severus had developed some addictions to his own potions and had agreed to align everything he took with James. *It seems having Harry around let Severus forget about his promises because he didn't want to show weakness in front of Harry. We really have to speak about this,* James thought.

*Damn, I really have pissed him off. Maybe I should think about warding the bedroom so that he can't come in. Yes, as if that would work. James would sit it out, and in the end I would get the scolding nevertheless,* Severus thought desperately and gulped again. The moment James released his wrist, Severus stood up, made a big circle around James and left for his bedroom.

Harry was feeling very uncomfortable. *Do adults really think we kids don't get all their hidden messages? Yesterday Albus and Ivy, today James. It was damn clear that he was warning Severus and that he was very mad with him for taking one of his potions. He is a Potions master, so why shouldn't he take those potions?* But as much as he hated to see James speaking with Severus like this, he would prefer to see more of it, just so he would not be left alone with James now.

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 18 - James

*Chapter 18 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 18 - James

James sat down beside Harry, smiling at him. "Don't forget to eat, Harry. There is nothing to worry about."

"Nothing to worry about?" Harry asked, bewildered. "What will you do with him? Don't think I couldn't see how you looked at him. When Uncle Vernon looked like that, I was in big trouble."

"Harry, I'm definitely not your Uncle Vernon, and Severus has nothing to fear from me. Do you think he would put his wards so low for me if he really feared me? Severus is an adult wizard, and he can choose his Healer as well. If he really doesn't want me, or if he's scared of me like you assumed, he would just fire me and put up the wards so that I couldn't reach him."

"But he looked scared," Harry interjected. "Maybe he doesn't fire you because he thinks the headmaster will force him to see you nevertheless."

"The headmaster?" James had to laugh shortly, but tried to stay serious because this topic really seemed to unsettle Harry. "What gives you the idea that the headmaster could force Severus to do anything he doesn't want to do? Not that Albus ever would want to do something like that."

"Yesterday when Severus was out of bed to show me... Oh, damn," Harry cursed when he realized that he had ratted out Severus.

"No worries, Harry, I already know that Severus was out of bed yesterday to show you the quarters. And I didn't expect him to do otherwise. As his Healer, of course I had to tell him to stay in bed because that would make sure that he at least would not try to overwork himself when he acted against it."

"But you scared him, and now he is waiting for you come to punish him. Don't try to tell me he wasn't scared. I saw it." Harry was becoming more and more agitated. James' eyes wandered quickly over the table until they fell on the empty cup. *Okay, so it is safe to go deeper now.*

"Maybe Severus is scared of what I will tell him or that I will be disappointed in him, but he isn't scared that I would punish him or hurt him, Harry. You should ask him about this later, but for now you have to trust me. I have known Severus for a long time, and he has gone through many very scary situations that I would never have been able to handle, but Severus did. He is a very brave and proud man, Harry, and it is hard for him to accept help or show weakness, but he is not scared of me. He trusts me, and you should not worry about what you saw just now. Nothing here is like you know it from the Dursleys."

Harry was calmer now, but still very confused. "But the headmaster threatened Severus yesterday. Not openly, but he did. I know it."

"What exactly was he saying, Harry?" James asked calmly and leaned back.

"I can't remember so clearly. I was a little excited, you know? But he was coming into the room, and when he saw that Severus was out of bed, he asked him if he would go back to bed freely or if he should call for you."

*Oh, fantastic, already making me the bad guy, Albus?"* And did Severus go to bed then?"

"No."

"So, he can't be too scared of me, don't you think?"

"He didn't go to bed because Ivy intervened and let him stay."

"Oh my God, Harry, please don't let Severus hear this. You know that he is doing all this to look strong in your presence, right? You are a very sensitive young man, and it isn't easy to hide anything from you. Ivy and Albus know Severus very well; they know how to push him to get him to do what seems to be best for him, but in the end it is Severus' decision. If he wanted me to leave and let him alone, he would have said so and thrown me out. And, Harry, I would have gone." James pronounced every single word to emphasize the message.

Harry breathed in deeply. He believed James. "Okay."

"Come on, Harry, you have to eat or you won't be finished with your breakfast before dinner."

Harry had almost forgotten about his breakfast and now started to eat his cereal. The first spoonfuls he ate in silence, but it felt awkward, so Harry said, "Ivy said you said I'm not allowed out. Why not?"

"Because I think it is best for you to learn more about your new guardians and rest as much as possible, Harry. I would also like to tell you more about the potion I gave you, which you had to take again yesterday evening, if what I heard is right."

Harry blushed and lowered his face further to the bowl of cereal.

"There is nothing to be embarrassed about, Harry. You have handled the situation very well and didn't push away the people who were helping you. The problem is that it will take a lot of self-control for you to take the potion at the right moment. It would be better for some people around you to also know about this problem."

"No!" Harry shouted and almost knocked the bowl from the table. "Please don't tell anyone, James!"

"Calm down, Harry." James was still sitting relaxed in his chair and just lifted one hand to gesture Harry to calm down. "I won't tell anybody about your problems. It will be your decision as to whom you want to let know about it. I could help you to speak with them, but you can also do it yourself. It's important that you understand how helpful it would be to let some people know. Yesterday, you would have ended with a panic attack in the hospital wing if the others hadn't known what to do. It will be a little tricky for you to read the signals of your body correctly and drink the potion at the right moment. You could be too far into the attack to react anymore. Therefore, it would be good for others to know what to do. Later you will learn to take it at the right moment, and I'm sure that eventually you won't need it any longer because you will learn other ways to control it."

Harry pondered about this and then said in a very small voice, "Maybe Hermione."

"Yes, I think that would be a good decision. Oh, and by the way, Hermione and Ron will come by this afternoon." He carefully observed Harry for any reactions.

Harry breathed in sharply. "Ron?"

"Yes, Ron. He was very upset after he had thought about what he had said to you and what it might have sounded like. I think you know your friend well enough to know that he often speaks before he thinks."

"Yes." Harry had to laugh because many funny situations came to his mind about this. "So, he isn't mad at me for living here?"

"No, he isn't, but he will tell you as much himself this afternoon. And, Harry, your cereal is going to soak completely."

The last spoonful went quickly into Harry's mouth, and he shoved the empty bowl away.

James drew his wand and asked, "May I cast a diagnostic spell, Harry?"

"Sure," Harry said. He felt much more comfortable with James now after their little talk. He sat still while James cast the diagnostic spell.

"Is it okay if I scan you as well?" James asked while showing him his hand to make sure what he meant by it.

Okay, that was something different. Harry looked down again and said, "I don't like to be touched so much." But the moment he said it, he knew that he was lying. He had really liked it when Ivy had kissed him on his forehead and when she had touched him. And he had even liked it when Severus had been patting his head and had been touching him in the bathroom. And he wasn't even scared about letting James touch him again. In the hospital wing it had felt quite good when James was letting healing magic flow through his hands. Harry didn't know why he had said that. Maybe because he thought it wasn't right to like to be touched. The Dursleys never touched him in such a manner.

"It's okay if you don't want to. I don't have to do it, but as I already explained in the infirmary, I prefer scanning over diagnostic spells."

James had already lowered his hand when Harry said, "No, if you want, it is okay with me... I think."

"Okay. Just relax, Harry." James went around Harry's chair and stood behind it. "The best way to scan a person is to have one hand on his forehead and one on his chest or stomach. Is that okay with you?"

"Kay." Harry was starting to get nervous.

Soon the hands were at the places James had mentioned and Harry felt the tingling of the scanning. After a while James said, "I will calm your nerves a little and give your internal organs some energy, okay?"

"Yes." Harry had a lump in his throat, and the word came out more like a croak.

"No reason to worry, Harry," James said and started the treatment.

Harry felt the amazing sensation of warm tingling and a wonderful high feeling in his mind. He felt totally relaxed. His thoughts untangled themselves, and his mind became clear of all negative thoughts and worries. His chest felt lighter, as if a heavy weight had been lifted from it. When the sensation stopped, Harry groaned in frustration.

James chuckled. "Something to get addicted to, right?" His hands were still lying on Harry.

"Yes, maybe that's the reason Severus wants you as his Healer," Harry said a little dreamily.

"I'm sure that is one reason for it," James said, chuckling. He slowly removed his hand from Harry's chest and a few seconds later from his head. "How do you feel?"

"Fantastic," Harry said, still dreamy because he was trying to memorize the feeling as best he could.

"Your nerves are much better than yesterday. Maybe you don't even have to use the potion very often. I'm a little surprised about that. But in a good way. You seem to feel safe here, right?"

Harry felt caught, and that brought him completely back to reality. "Ehm..." He didn't know how to react on this question.

"Merlin, Harry, that is something very good. It shows that you are still a healthy young man and that your relatives haven't managed to damage you too much."

Harry snorted. "Healthy?"

"Severus' attitude seems to have already rubbed off on you, but yes, healthy. You are able to let people help you, and you can still feel comfortable when someone touches you. You are very brave, Harry. To trust someone after what you have gone through takes a lot of courage."

James had sat down again and was now watching the boy before him.

Harry didn't know what to say to all this. He didn't feel brave. The only thing he could do was stare past James at the fireplace.

"I have to look for Severus," James said when he sensed that Harry needed some time alone to think about all this.

James had already stood up and moved in the direction of the stairs when Harry jumped up and addressed him again. "Oh, but I have one more question, James."

"And this question is?" James turned to face Harry.

"About those therapy sessions I have to take. How often and how long do we have to make it?"

"There is no schedule for it, Harry. And the length also depends on how you feel at the time."

"No offense, James, but I would prefer to get the first one over as soon as possible. I really don't know what to do and what to say. What if I can't do it or do something wrong?"

"There is nothing to do right or wrong in a therapy session, Harry. You don't have to worry about things like this. Okay?"

Harry wasn't completely convinced, but nevertheless he said, "Okay."

James headed again for the stairs.

"But you didn't tell me when the first session will be, James," Harry shouted after him.

James didn't turn again and just answered while climbing the stairs. "Your first session ended just a few minutes ago, Harry."

And with that Harry stood open-mouthed in the living room of his new home. That had been his first session? It had been just a talk, and quite a good talk, with James. *Maybe it won't be so bad to have therapy sessions after all.*

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 19 - Decorating

*Chapter 19 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 19 - Decorating

Harry had gone into his room after he finished his breakfast. He didn't know what to do, so he just sat on the window sill and thought about his current situation. *How can a life change so completely? I still can't believe that I live here now. He thought about the Dursleys. What will they do now? They can't remember me. I'm glad that I don't have to see them again, but I also have an odd feeling about it.*

He was still on the sill, staring out of the window, when Ivy knocked at his door.

"Yes?" Harry said, curious about who it was.

Ivy came in, and when she saw him on the sill with a sad expression on his face, she was worried. "Everything okay, Harry?"

"Sure," Harry said and jumped from the sill. "I was just thinking."

When he came over to her, Ivy stroked his hair and kissed him on his forehead. "You shouldn't brood so much. Why didn't you decorate your room or read a little?"

"Decorate? I haven't anything to decorate it with," Harry said, confused.

"We still have time until dinner. Oh, by the way, I wanted to ask you if you would like me to keep you company during dinner. Severus is sleeping, and he won't be coming down for dinner," Ivy said and couldn't suppress the worry that was visible through her eyes.

"I would love it if we could eat together, but how is Severus?" Harry asked, worried.

"Not so good, but he soon will be fine if he stays in bed. I only have to work until two, and I will make sure that he rests today," Ivy said, and her worried expression was replaced by a determined one.

"I should have convinced him to go back to bed this morning," Harry said sadly.

"Harry, Severus is an adult, and it isn't your responsibility to watch over him. I hardly believe you would enjoy the consequences of nagging Severus too much. But now, back to your room, Harry. Let's make it a little more cozy, okay?"

"How?" Harry asked, confused.

"First, you should choose a color for your walls. Or do you want a moving picture like the twins?" Ivy asked as she drew her wand.

"No, I think color is enough, but I don't care if it stays like it is. It's okay."

"It shouldn't just be okay, Harry. You should feel safe and happy here. So what color would you like? We can try and experiment a little." She waved her wand and colored the walls red and golden.

"Severus will kill me when he sees this," Harry said, laughing.

"Severus wouldn't mind, Harry. He wants you to be happy here. So, do you want it like this?" Ivy asked seriously, even though her heart had made a jump at seeing Harry laugh so freely.

Harry grimaced and then said, "I don't think so. Maybe beige or light yellow. I like it bright."

A wave of Ivy's wand and two walls were painted completely in beige and the other two in a light yellow with a horizontal line of beige in it. "What do you think?" Ivy asked.

"It's perfect," Harry replied, beaming.

"Okay, and now your poster. Where do you want it to be placed?" Ivy had taken the poster and was looking questioningly at Harry.

"Maybe beside the cupboard." Mentioning the cupboard brought back the memory of this morning and that Severus had discovered the state of his clothes. Harry looked sadly at the floor.

Ivy noticed the change in Harry's mood. "No brooding, Harry!" She ruffled his hair and then glued the poster at the place Harry wanted it. When she faced Harry again, he wasn't looking at the floor, but he still had a nervous expression. "Severus told me about the problem with your clothes. Let's have a look at what you have in your cupboard so that we know what to buy."

Harry didn't want to show Ivy his awful clothes. "It's not necessary, Ivy. I will just buy new ones when James lets me out. You only have to give me money from my vault."

"Harry, I think Severus has already told you that we sealed your vault until you become of age. We will go shopping tomorrow. James said it will be okay. We could even go today, but Severus wants to accompany us, and he isn't allowed to leave today. I hope it's okay for you to wear Severus' clothes until tomorrow. You look quite handsome in them, young man. The ladies will fall for you when they see you like this." She grinned at him to ease the tension.

Harry looked down at himself. "No, it's no problem." He looked up at Ivy and added, "Do we really have to look through my clothes? They are very worn out."

"If you don't want me to look at them, it's okay with me, but you should know that I don't mind looking through them," Ivy said while she started again to stroke loose wisps of hair out of Harry's face.

"It's embarrassing, and I don't think there is anything you would want me to keep," Harry said while leaning into her touch.

"Okay, why don't you throw everything you don't want to keep in the garbage and then let me look through the ones you want to keep?" Ivy offered.

"Okay," Harry said. "Now?"

"Yes, I would like to make a list for the shopping tomorrow, and right now I still have time. Dinner will be ready in twenty minutes," Ivy explained. "I'll leave you to look through the clothes and will be back in ten minutes, okay?"

"Five will be enough, I think," Harry said, looking uncertainly at her.

"Fine, five minutes then, Harry. And don't worry. There is nothing to be embarrassed about," Ivy said and left the room.

Harry looked frantically through his clothes and threw almost all of Dudley's clothes into the garbage. He only kept two shirts and trousers that looked at least decent and some old socks. *I still need something to wear for tomorrow.*

When Ivy came back, the clothes had already vanished out of the garbage. She looked through the remaining clothes and arranged them in stacks. Even so, there were only two, and the one with Dudley's old clothes Ivy was now holding in her hands. "Do you really want to keep these, Harry?"

"I need something for tomorrow."

"So that is the only reason?"

"Yes, why else would I want to keep them?" Harry looked disgusted.

"Then we will throw them away as well," Ivy said and vanished them with her wand. Then she tapped her wand at a free place in the cupboard, and a stack with clothes appeared. She turned to Harry and looked him up and down. When she was satisfied, she turned to the new stack and tapped it again. The stack seemed to shrink a little. "That's for tomorrow. They are Severus' again, but I shrank them to your size." She turned to face Harry and said, "Okay, now we should go down and see if Twinky has already served dinner."

They ate peacefully together, and when they had finished, Ivy said, "I have to go now. Ron and Hermione will come and visit you soon. Your doorknob will glow when they try to enter our quarters. I have spelled the doorknob of Severus' and my bedroom to not glow so that Severus isn't tempted to get up, but please inform him when you let Hermione and Ron in."

"I thought he was sleeping?" Harry asked, a little scared that he would disturb Severus.

"Yes, he is, but it's better to wake him briefly to say that you have visitors, than surprise him when he hears them. Severus would like to know when you have guests, and he can fall asleep again," Ivy explained.

"Okay, I will let him know. I just hope he won't try to stand up again."

"He won't, Harry." Again there was this sad expression in her face, and Harry became worried.

"Is he really okay? Maybe I should send Ron and Hermione a message to come by later so that I don't have to wake Severus."

"No, Harry, that isn't necessary. Severus will be okay soon, and waking him for a short time won't worsen his condition. Don't worry," Ivy said and smiled at Harry, but the smile didn't reach her eyes.

When his doorknob flared green and started to make a *asirring* sound, Harry jumped up from his bed and ran to the front door. A face had appeared on it, and Harry stopped dead in his tracks when he saw it. The face looked very much like Professor Trelawney. The moment it saw Harry, it started to speak, "Mr. Ronald Weasley and Miss Hermione Granger ask to be let in."

"Eh... then let them in," Harry said, unsure how to make the door to open because it looked as if it didn't have a handle.

"As Master Harry wishes," the face said, and the door sprang open.

## Chapter 20 - Ron and Hermione

*Chapter 20 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

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### Chapter 20 - Ron and Hermione

Hermione was in Harry's arms before he could take another breath. "Oh, Harry, it is so good to see you. I'm so sorry that we worried you during our last visit. I couldn't even concentrate on the subjects today."

"Oh God, I distracted Hermione Granger from her studies. How can I ever make up for this?" Harry joked. He was so glad to meet his friends and couldn't understand why he had felt so nervous about it.

Hermione loosened her embrace and playfully hit Harry on his shoulder. "Very funny, Harry."

Harry couldn't wipe the happy grin from his face. Only when his gaze fell on Ron, who was still standing near the door, did his face fall a little.

Ron was looking ashamed and nervous.

"Oh, come on, Ron. Don't be such a prat," Hermione ordered.

"I'm sorry, Harry, I didn't mean what I said. I was just shocked that you will live with... that you will live here now," Ron said, blushing deeply.

Harry didn't know what to say and just stared at Ron.

"Stop behaving like kids, both of you! We are best friends," Hermione intervened.

"I'm really sorry, mate!" Ron said and came over to the other two. "It's okay that you live here. Really." Ron put one of his hands on Harry's shoulder and hoped Harry wouldn't shrug it away.

Harry didn't; he was so overwhelmed to have his friends back, and he was eager to show them his room. He also placed one of his hands on Ron's shoulder. "Friends."

"Yeah, friends, mate." Ron laughed in relief.

"Boys," Hermione said, rolling her eyes.

"Just wait here. I have to inform Severus that you're here," Harry said. He was so happy that he didn't even notice the shocked faces of his friends when he called Severus by his first name. Harry took the steps two at a time as he ran to Severus' bedroom. He stopped in front of it, panting, and knocked.

"Yes, I heard your friends. Just go into your room or the library." Severus' hoarse voice could be heard through the door.

"Are you okay? Can I come in?" Harry asked, worried.

"Your friends are waiting, Harry," Severus replied. His voice almost broke.

"Can I please come in, Severus? Just for a minute," Harry pleaded.

Severus groaned. "If you insist."

Severus was lying in bed. Sweat was forming on his forehead, and he looked paler than he usually looked; that meant something.

Harry was shocked, and when Severus started to cough harshly, he went over to him, stopping a few inches away from him, unsure what to do. "Shall I call for Poppy or James?"

"No, Harry!" Severus ordered while trying to sit up a little.

"I don't think you should sit up, Severus." He gently pushed Severus back onto his cushion.

"And I think you should keep distance between us, or do you want to get sick as well?" Severus barked.

"You look awful. How can you become so ill in a few hours?" Harry asked, confused.

Severus rolled his eyes. "Your friends are waiting."

"You could have said, 'I don't want to speak about it'. That's what you wanted me to say, so why can't you do it as well?" Harry was sick with worry about Severus. *Did Ivy know how sick Severus was? Maybe that was the reason for her sad and concerned expression.* "I would really like to call for someone. Maybe you need a fever reducer."

"Harry, I assure you that I'm fully capable of calling someone when I feel the need..." He couldn't end this sentence because a harsh coughing fit ailed him. Severus almost toppled over.

It looked extremely painful, and Harry started to panic. He left the room before Severus recovered. When he was down in the living room, his friends looked worriedly at him.

"Are you all right, Harry? You look as if you have seen a ghost," Hermione said and tried to calm Harry, who was frantically looking around.

"I need to call someone. Severus looks awful." Harry was so worried that he had problems remembering which portrait led to which teacher. Ivy had to teach, and so he didn't want to try her portrait. *The Headmaster, yes, I have to call the Headmaster!* Harry thought and turned to Phineas. "Please, I have to speak with Albus."

"He has visitors," was all Phineas said.

"But I have to speak with him. It's very urgent. Please tell him that I need to speak with him," Harry said frantically.

"I already did! He will come as soon as his visitors have left," Phineas stated, annoyed.

Hermione tried to calm Harry. "Calm down, Harry, please! I'm sure Professor Dumbledore will come soon."

Harry started to breathe fast, and sweat was forming on his forehead.

Hermione looked worriedly at Ron. She hoped Harry wouldn't get out of control like he did in the hospital wing. Ron was also very worried but could only shrug his shoulders when Hermione looked questioningly at him. Both moved closer to Harry, and Hermione tried to lay a calming hand on Harry's chest.

Harry felt the worry start to overcome him. The voices of Ron and Hermione started to fade away. *What shall I do?* He could not describe the relief that washed over him when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder and calming magic flowing through him. Harry turned in the direction he assumed the owner of the hand stood. Slowly he came back to reality, and the form of Albus stood in front of him.

"I'm here, Harry. Breathe slowly," Albus said in a calm voice.

Harry wanted to be able to speak as fast as possible and fought hard to come back to reality. As soon as he was able to form words, he almost shouted, "No, you have to look at Severus. Please!"

"First you have to calm down and breathe normally, Harry!" Albus said calmly and let more calming magic flow into Harry.

Harry was annoyed by Albus' calm behavior. "But Severus! You have to look at him. He is very ill."

"I know that he is very ill, Harry. I will go to him when you have calmed down." When he saw Harry shaking his head and fighting his magic, he frowned. "Twinky!" he commanded in a voice that made Ron and Hermione take a step backwards.

The house-elf popped up near Albus, and he ordered her to call for Poppy and James, if he was still in the infirmary.

Seconds later Poppy and James emerged from the fireplace and hurried over to the small group.

"He is fighting my calming magic, and I fear he will panic when I let go, James," Albus explained to James. Ron and Hermione had never seen their Headmaster so worried and even a little unsure of what to do.

"It's okay, Albus, I will take over from here." James pulled Harry's back against his chest and rested one of his hands against Harry's chest and the other on Harry's forehead. He sat down against the back of the couch and fixed Harry's head under his chin. "Stop fighting, Harry!"

"But Severus! You have to look at him. He is very ill, please!" Harry pleaded and tried to wriggle free. James had a perfect grip on Harry, and the flow of magic that James let flow through Harry made his body almost completely relaxed. He couldn't even fully control his limbs any longer.

"Poppy and Albus are already on their way to him, Harry. You know that Poppy is a great Mediwitch." James was relieved that this comment made Harry stop fighting. "That's it, Harry. And now I want you to breathe together with me. Breathe in... and out... in... and out..."

After a few minutes Harry had calmed down and opened his eyes. His eyes fell on his friends, and he groaned, frustrated that the two had seen him like that.

"No, Harry, there is no reason to be embarrassed or frustrated. Remember we already spoke about letting your friends know what your problems are. They are your friends, Harry, and they want to help you. They are worried."

Hermione was the first to recover from the shock and came over to the two people sitting on the floor. "Yes, Harry, we are worried. You can tell us everything." She looked uncertainly first at Harry and then at James, who looked encouragingly at her.

Hermione took Harry's hand. "It's okay, Harry."

"I wish I wasn't such a damn freak." He groaned when the flow of magic immediately started to increase.

"Never say something like that again, Harry. How can you even think something like that?" Hermione scolded him.

"Yeah, mate, you are no freak," Ron said, still very unsure what to do but also very worried.

Albus came down the stairs and over to the couch.

Harry tried to struggle free, but James didn't let go. "Not now, Harry. Just listen to what Albus has to say. We will just stay where we are."

"Yes, my boy, please stay where you are and let James help you. Poppy is taking care of Severus, so you don't have to worry. There was nothing out of control, Harry. Severus has pneumonia, and it is normal that he is feeling this bad right now."

James had lowered the flow of magic to an amount that let Harry follow the conversation and speak.

"But he was well this morning, and now he looks as if he is dying," Harry shouted.

"Harry, don't start to panic again. Would you like your potion, or do you think you can calm yourself without it, with only me for help?" James asked.

"But Severus..." Harry tried to reason with James, but was interrupted by the Healer.

"No, Harry, answer my question. We will take care of you first, and then we can talk about others," James said strictly.

"I will calm down without the potion," Harry said grumpily.

"Okay, then stop fighting my magic flow and concentrate on your breathing while I tell you something about Severus. If you start to fight me again, or start to get agitated, it will be the potion for you, Harry. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, James," Harry replied, defeated.

"Severus wasn't well this morning, Harry. Do you really think I would have spoken so harshly to him if there wasn't a reason for it? Severus had taken something that made it seem that he was well, but this had only worsened his condition. Now he is suffering the result, and we cannot give him another potion. But, Harry, you shouldn't worry about Severus that much. He will be okay soon. Tomorrow he will even be able to go shopping with you. There is no reason to panic."

"I'm sorry," Harry said. He had calmed down completely and started to feel stupid to be held like this.

"That's not what we want from you, Harry. There is no need to be sorry. You just have to learn from this. You must be careful how far you let your emotions affect you. That would have been a situation where you should have taken your potion," James explained and let go of Harry's head. Only his hand on Harry's chest stayed where it was.

"But I didn't have one!" Harry said, confused.

"Yes, that's right. I should have given you your applicator this morning, but I was a little distracted. Maybe we should go into your room, and I will show you and your friends how to use it, okay?" James asked.

"Kay," Harry said. When James pulled his hand from Harry's chest, Harry stood up and smiled shyly at his friends.

"Merlin, you gave me quite a shock, mate," Ron said, relieved that Harry was 'normal' again.

"Yes, but that's nothing to be embarrassed about, Harry," Hermione said quickly and cast a warning glance at Ron.

"I didn't say it was. Of course he doesn't have to be embarrassed about it," Ron said angrily at Hermione. He turned to Harry. "You know I didn't mean it that way, right?"

Harry rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah, let's just go into my room. I feel a little weak after this magic thingy." He motioned in the direction of the couch.

"Magic thingy," Albus laughed while patting James' shoulder. "That's one way to put it."

James grinned, and everyone started to laugh. It felt good that the tension was vanishing completely now.

"I will go back to my office. If you need me again, just call me," Albus said to no particular person, just into the room.

## Chapter 21 – Hard to Accept

*Chapter 21 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 21 Hard to accept

When they were sitting in Harry's room, a tense silence lay over the room. Ron looked around curiously, and Hermione looked eagerly at James as if she were awaiting a very interesting lesson. Harry sat nervously on his bed while James sat relaxed on a chair near him.

"Do you want me to speak with your friends or do you want to try it yourself?" James asked to break the silence.

Harry looked nervously at James. "I would prefer if you could do it."

"Okay," James said and turned to Ron and Hermione. "Harry has problems controlling his emotions. Sometimes they overwhelm him and he starts to panic. It's very difficult for him to notice it and take his potion in time. Here he will need your help. You can notice when Harry starts to get problems more easily than Harry can, so you can help him to take his potion in time."

"How do we know when it's the right time?" Hermione asked, worried.

"There are some signs like sweating, frantically looking around or staring at one point, paleness, and fast breathing. The potion has no side effects, so it is better to use it too soon than too late. The potion in this applicator is weak. Harry will still be able to attend classes, but it won't help if he has worked himself too far into the panic attack. In that case you have to call for me, Madam Pomfrey, or Professor Snape. We all have a stronger potion for Harry or are able to help him in another way. Try to speak calmly with him, so he knows that he isn't alone until help comes," James explained calmly.

*I'm sure Hermione is annoyed that she hasn't a quill and sheet to write down every word James says* Harry thought while looking at his friend, who hung on James' lips.

"How do we give him the potion?" Hermione asked while Ron bounced nervously on his seat.

"You don't give him the potion. If Harry isn't able to take it himself, then it is already too late for the light potion. You just have to call one of us then," James explained. He fumbled in his bag and pulled out an applicator. He turned to face Harry again. "This is the applicator. You have to take the mouthpiece in your mouth, and then you have to press the other end. That will make exactly the right dose of potion spill into your mouth." He handed Harry the potion applicator.

"Any questions?" James asked and looked at the three teenagers.

Harry and Ron shook their heads, but it was obvious that Hermione had a lot of questions. "But why does Harry have these problems? He never had them before."

"It's for Harry to decide what he wants to tell you about the causes of his problems. I can only explain to you that Harry has suppressed his problems for some time, and at the moment his problems became obvious, his inner barriers lifted, so his emotions take over from time to time. That has nothing to do with weakness. Harry will learn to control it, and feeling safe will help him. He needs his friends to know that he is accepted and that there are people who are worried and care for him."

Hermione nodded, fascinated. Harry would have laughed about Hermione's attitude if it weren't him they were discussing.

Hermione pondered about what the Healer had said and then asked, "What about Quidditch? What if he gets one of these attacks on the broom?"

Harry drew in a sharp breath. He hadn't thought about that. *Oh, no, please don't let him forbid me to fly.*

James sighed and looked flustered for the first time. "That is something I want to discuss with Harry first."

"No, James, you can't forbid me to fly, please!" Harry begged.

"Harry, please, stay calm," James said while laying a calming hand on Harry's arm. He turned to Hermione and Ron. "I'm sorry, but could you please leave us alone for a moment?"

"Sure," Hermione said and pulled Ron out of the room with her.

"James, please, Quidditch is my life! Please don't take it away from me." Harry almost started to cry in frustration.

"Harry, getting a panic attack during Quidditch would be too dangerous. You are in a stressed situation while playing Quidditch, and stress is a catalyst for your panic attacks. It's only a question of time before you will fall from your broom. I cannot let you play Quidditch," James said calmly but with determination.

"That's not fair! I don't want these damn panic attacks, and now they are stealing from me the only thing that I have fun with. Flying is no stress, James. It's the only time when I can forget everything. The only time where I feel free," Harry pleaded with James.

"Harry, I know that this is hard for you to accept, but it is not something we can discuss. Quidditch is too dangerous at the moment. We can speak about it in a few months. I don't forbid you to fly. You can go flying as long as there is an adult around who can react if something happens. So if you need to fly in order to feel free, I will not hinder you."

"But Quidditch..." Harry started to beg again.

"...Is not open to discussion, Harry," James said strictly.

Harry threw himself angrily onto his bed.

"It's okay that you are angry now, but I have to take care that you don't risk your health. It's a few months without Quidditch. Even if you aren't able to join the team when you are allowed to play again, you can play next year," James said sympathetically and stood up. Looking at the withdrawn teenager on the bed, he said, "I will leave now. Speak with your friends, Harry. I'm sure they can show you that there are other ways to have fun besides playing Quidditch. You just have to let them help you." He left the room and sent Ron and Hermione back inside.

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"Come on, Harry, the Healer is right. Quidditch would be too dangerous, and it isn't for a long time."

What annoyed Harry even more than just the words was that it wasn't Hermione saying them but Ron. Harry turned to face Ron, who had sat down on his bed. "That's easy for you to say. You are still on the team."

"Do you want me stop playing as well? I would do it as an apology for my stupid behavior in the Hospital Wing, but then you won't be allowed to hold it against me again. We'll be even then," Ron said seriously.

Harry looked at his best friend, stunned. "You would give up Quidditch for me? You tried so hard to get on the team."

"Sure I'd do it for you. You're my best mate," Ron stated soulfully.

That made Harry forget all his anger, and he started to smile. "I don't want you to give up Quidditch for me."

Ron sighed in relief. "Thanks, mate."

"Sometimes you boys are really stupid," Hermione said, rolling her eyes as she rummaged in her bag. "I brought you my notes from our classes. You should copy them and do the homework to stay up-to-date."

Harry looked at Ron and rolled his eyes.

Ron chuckled. "Now you see what I have to go through all the time while you're enjoying yourself here."

After an hour of going through Hermione's notes and doing homework together, they were interrupted by two screaming kids. Eathan and Lysander came running into the room and jumped on Harry. "Harry, come and play!"

"Whoa, calm down!" Harry said, lifting the twins off him. "How was daycare?"

"Great. Look what we drew for you," Eathan said and thrust a picture into Harry's hand.

"It's our family," Lysander explained. "Look, there are Mum and Dad..."

"... And here are Grandma and Grandpa..." Eathan went on.

"And that's Eathan and me, and here are you, Harry." Lysander ended the explanation while pointing at a red dot which had a line on each side that lead to two smaller dots that were, according to the twins' explanation, themselves. And the dots were surrounded by the other dots that should picture the rest of the family.

"It's great," Harry said and looked excitedly at the drawing. It felt so good that the twins were so eager to add him to their family.

"It's for you," Eathan said. "Do you want to play with us now?"

"My friends are here, Eathan." Harry gestured at Ron and Hermione. "Oh, by the way, this is Ron and Hermione, my best friends. Guys, this is Eathan and Lysander."

"Hello, you two. Nice to meet you," Hermione said and turned to Harry. "We'll go now, Harry," she said and hugged Harry. "We'll come by tomorrow, okay?"

"That would be great," Harry said. He turned to the twins, who looked at him eagerly. *It won't take much before they start shoving Ron and Hermione out of the room,* Harry



thought, amused. "I'll show my friends out. Why don't you wait in your room? I'll come to you in a minute."

The twins ran out of the room, already planning what to play with Harry.

After saying goodbye to Hermione and Ron, he passed the two women of the family and was immediately mollycoddled. Hands were on his head and arms, and he could hardly tell which hand was from which woman. "How are you?" Minerva asked, and Harry was sure that the hand on his forehead was hers.

"I'm fine! James gave me the applicator," Harry said while patting the pocket in which he had placed it.

"That's good, Harry. And have you spoken with Ron and Hermione about it?" Ivy asked, worriedly grabbing his hand.

"Yes, I did. Ehm, the twins are waiting." Harry tried to free himself from the arms of the women. It was a good feeling to have them around, but also a little annoying. He could understand Severus' annoyed reaction much better now.

He played for a few hours with the twins. He would never have guessed, but he enjoyed it a lot. They drew together, played 'Memory,' and fished for paper fishes that were floating in the air and spat water at them when they were too slow. They were still deeply involved in playing when Ivy came in and said, "Time for supper, you three. Eathan, Lysander, into the washroom. I will join you in a second."

The twins were grumbling because they would have liked to go on playing, but headed in the direction of the washroom.

"You can use our washroom upstairs, Harry. Severus and I have discussed it. If the children's bathroom is too annoying for you, you can use ours," Ivy said understandingly.

"It's no problem. It's no big deal once you get used to it. Maybe I will take up your offer from time to time, though," Harry said.

"Do as you like, Harry," Ivy said, and Harry followed her out of the room.

Harry sat down on the closed toilet while Ivy helped the twins to wash their hands and faces. He looked longingly at the trio. Harry wished he could have had a mom when he was the twins' age. While the twins were getting dried by Ivy, Harry went over to the sink and used it himself. "Will Severus join us for supper?"

"No, he is still resting, but he is much better already, and we will go shopping tomorrow afternoon."

"Yeah, shopping!" The twins shouted excitedly.

"Oh, no, my babies, not for you this time." Seeing the sad faces, she added, "But Grandpa is thinking about going to Diagon Alley with you three this weekend." Immediately, the faces lit up again.

"Oh, and Harry, before I forget I have a message for you from Remus. He has a free period tomorrow between ten and eleven in the morning and will come by to visit you."

Harry was beaming. He was already worried that Remus hadn't contacted him until now. Harry looked forward to the meeting and to the whole day tomorrow. First, meeting Remus and then going shopping with Severus and Ivy. With a smile, Harry went to eat supper with his family.

## Chapter 22 – Remus' Visit

*Chapter 22 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 22 Remus' Visit

Harry was eagerly waiting for Remus to arrive. He had gotten up at nine to eat breakfast and wasn't finished yet. Severus sat grumpily at the opposite end of the table and read the *Daily Prophet*. From time to time, he coughed and then took a sip from his tea. He relaxed visibly after it.

Harry grinned. "Good stuff, eh?"

Severus glared at Harry. "You are way too cheeky this morning. How come?"

"I'm not cheeky. I was just trying to make conversation. You look better today." Harry blushed a little, remembering the fuss he had made yesterday over Severus.

"Yes, I would do anything not to panic my new son again," Severus said mockingly and raised an eyebrow as he looked at Harry.

Harry looked alarmed. "You haven't taken a potion again, have you?"

Severus rolled his eyes. "No, I haven't. And even if I had, it would be none of your concern, Harry. I am just waiting for James to arrive. He should be here any minute. Has Ivy already spoken with you about the shopping?"

"She said that we'll go to Diagon Alley this afternoon." Harry looked skeptically at Severus. "Are you sure you're healthy enough for it? We could wait a few more days."

"We are wizards, Harry. Another potion from James and some healing magic, and I'm as good as new. So don't worry, we will leave at three this afternoon," Severus said.

"Ivy said Remus will come over at ten," Harry said cautiously; he knew about the problems between Remus and Severus.

Severus' face darkened. "I know," he growled.

Harry looked sadly down at his cereal. "If James would let me out, I could meet Remus somewhere else."

"You can have whomever you want as your guest here, but don't expect me to like them all. And now, stop this, and eat your cereal before the werewo... before Lupin comes."

Harry grabbed his spoon again, but only poked half-heartedly at his cereal.

"Do what you want, but don't whine at me when James comes to force-feed you. He will be here any minute, and if Lupin comes, he will have to wait until you have eaten up," Severus said sternly.

"I'm eating," Harry said and shoved a spoonful into his mouth.

The fireplace flared, and James came over to the table. "Ah, my two favorite patients."

Harry hastily shoved the rest of his cereal into his mouth while he looked shyly at Severus.

Severus grinned at Harry's attempt to avoid James' scolding about his eating habits. His grin vanished when James reached him and laid a hand on his forehead.

"How are you feeling, Severus?" James asked, eyeing him closely.

"Fine," Severus said, and immediately was shaken by a coughing fit.

"I see," James said disapprovingly. "I think I will take a closer look at you in your bedroom, but first I want to check on Harry." On his way over to Harry, he took a quick glance at the empty cup in front of Harry. "How was the juice-potion cocktail? Better than the tea?"

"Yes, much better. Thank you," Harry answered.

James smiled at Harry and asked, "May I take a quick scan?"

Harry nodded and leaned against the back of his chair to give James access to his chest and his forehead for the scanning. Soon he was lulled half into sleep by the scanning and the healing magic James let flow into him. When the flow decreased, Harry could hear James speaking to him again. "How have you been sleeping?"

Harry bit his bottom lip, and when he felt not only James' but also Severus' eyes on him, he lowered his head.

James let go of Harry, pulled a chair near him, and sat down. He laid a hand on Harry's leg and said calmly, "Harry, I can't help you if you aren't honest with me. Please tell me the truth."

"I had a nightmare, and then I couldn't sleep again," Harry said miserably.

James sighed. "We have to keep an eye on this, Harry. If the nightmares and sleeping problems last, we will have to do something about it. I want you to tell me when you have problems, okay?"

"Yes," Harry said, still gnawing on his bottom lip.

"And stop biting your lips or you will never catch Miss Granger's eye," Severus said mockingly.

"Hermione isn't interested in me," Harry said, looking sullenly at Severus and James, who were both grinning.

A high voice interrupted the glaring duel between the three. "Mr. Remus Lupin asks to be let in."

Severus groaned and stood up. He pinched the bridge of his nose to suppress the oncoming headache.

"Sometimes I really wonder if it is worth having this awful voice on the door just to annoy Minerva. It was real fun to see her dumbfounded face when she first saw Trelawney's sister's face on the door and she wasn't able to get rid of it, but her voice is really getting on my nerves," he mumbled to Harry and James as he passed them. He quickly climbed up the stairs, and when he almost was on the top of the stairs, he shouted. "Let him in, Charlee!" With that, he vanished on the upper floor and, as the sound of a shutting door indicated, into his bedroom.

The door swung open, and Remus came into the room. He looked around the room to orient himself and found Harry sitting at the table. "Ah, there you are, Harry." With long steps, he came over to the table. "James," he greeted the Healer and then turned to Harry. "It's so good to see you, Harry." Affectionately, he ruffled Harry's hair.

"I will go and look after Severus," James said, heading in the direction of the stairs.

"Let's go into my room, Remus," Harry said, leading Remus to his room.

Remus looked curiously around the room. "Nice," he said, and grinned at the proud expression on Harry's face.

"Ivy helped me decorate it." Harry jumped on the bed and gestured for Remus to sit down on a chair. "Have a seat."

"It's really nice, but still a little bare, don't you think?" Remus said, rummaging in his pocket.

Harry looked around, confused. "I like it. Look, I even have a poster." Harry pointed at the Quidditch poster.

"Yes, it's nice, but I thought maybe you would like to have these to decorate a little more." Remus gave Harry a thick envelope. Harry looked questioningly at Remus, but he only said, "Open it!"

Harry tore the envelope open and looked at the stack of pictures in awe. "Wow, thank you, Remus." Harry threw himself at the man.

"It's my pleasure. Come on, let's have a look at them." Remus pushed the chair aside and gently guided Harry over to the bed to sit down.

"Look, there are your parents," Remus said and pointed at a photo where James and Lily Potter stood smiling, arm in arm. "Lily and James were great people, but I've told you about them so much. Let's look at this one here. It's Sirius, your godfather."

A black-haired, good-looking man was grinning at Harry from the photograph. He pulled grimaces and even stuck out his tongue from time to time.

Harry had to grin about this behavior. "Yes, you've told me about him. That's the one Severus had the most problems with, right?" The grin vanished and was replaced by a sad and worried expression. *Severus will not be happy to see these photos. I have to find a good place to hide them.*

"Yes, they had problems, but that was a long time ago, and Sirius has been dead for twelve years now," Remus said and sighed.

"You told me that he was killed by the explosion while fighting with Pettigrew, but that doesn't change that Severus hates him. He almost ran from the room when the door

announced your arrival. I'm glad that he can tolerate me here, even though I look like my father."

"Harry, listen!" Remus said and put an arm around Harry. "Severus isn't just tolerating you here. He took you in willingly because he wants to help you. He doesn't see a copy of James in you any longer. He stopped that even before the final battle. You know that."

Harry just sighed and looked at the floor.

"Severus tolerates me here, but he *wants* you to be here!" Remus said, determined. Looking at the photo again, he added, "Your godfather would have done anything for you. It wouldn't be fair to see him in a bad light just because we made bad decisions while we were teenagers, Harry. Sirius was a warmhearted and loyal friend to your family."

"I know, Remus; I didn't want to upset you." Harry looked guiltily at him.

Remus laughed, but it was a sad laugh. "Always worried about others, right? But what about you? How are you, Harry?"

"I'm fine; Poppy and James have helped me a lot," Harry said, but felt uncomfortable speaking about it. "I would prefer not to speak about what happened."

"It's okay, Harry. If you ever change your mind, you know where I am," Remus said, and pulled Harry closer.

"Kay," Harry said shyly.

Remus changed the topic. "So, do you want to glue them on the wall, Harry? I still have fifteen minutes."

"Yes, maybe over here." Harry pointed at the wall at the head of his bed.

They spent the next ten minutes arranging the photos like Harry wanted them. In the middle was the photo of his parents smiling, arm in arm, and around it Harry arranged the photos of himself with his parents. Then followed the photos of his grandparents, and the photos in which Lily was alone or with her friends, and finally the group photos with friends of Harry's parents.

Remus didn't comment when Harry put the photos of Sirius and James back in the envelope and placed it under his pillow. He couldn't suppress the stinging pain it caused in his chest, but he understood that for Harry it was more important not to anger Severus. "Okay, Harry, I have to leave. I hope you will visit me soon; or we will see each other in classes."

"Thanks a lot for the photos, Remus. I really like them, including the ones of Sirius and James, but..."

Remus interrupted him and said, "I totally understand, Harry. You don't have to explain anything. Next time I come to visit you, I want to see photos of your new family, okay?"

Harry smiled at this. "That's a cool idea. Maybe I can find a camera in Diagon Alley."

"Oh. Right, you're going shopping today. Ivy told me." He stood up. "So, have fun, Harry." He ruffled Harry's hair.

Harry patted Remus' hand playfully away. "Stop that, Remus. My hair is tousled enough."

Remus laughed and let Harry lead him to the door.

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When Severus knocked at Harry's room to call him for lunch, Harry was lying on his stomach on his bed, looking longingly at the photos. "Come in," Harry shouted and had to struggle with himself to avert his eyes from the photos.

Severus entered the room and immediately saw the photos on the wall.

Harry held his breath and waited for the outburst.

Severus came over and sat on the bed. "So, he brought you some photos? It seems your room has become more cozy, right?"

"Yeah," Harry said cautiously. He was still worried that Severus wouldn't like some of the photos.

Severus eyed the photos closely. His expression was soft, and he almost smiled while looking at Lily. "I have a few of your mother when she was young. If you like, you can look at them and take some for your collection."

"Really? That would be great." Harry was excited. Whatever he had expected, it wasn't this, and it was surely not what followed.

Severus' expression changed to a scowl. "Didn't he give you photos of your father and godfather?" He looked sternly at Harry, who started to bite his lip again.

Harry sighed and pulled out the envelope from under his pillow. "I'm sorry. I knew you wouldn't want them in the quarters, but I hoped I could hide them in the envelope."

"Why would I want you to hide something from me? What did I tell you about lying? Hiding something from me is almost like lying, don't you think?"

Harry face dropped. *Oh, no, I have already broken one of the family rules.*

Seeing Harry pale, Severus said, "You showed me the photos of your own free will, and so you didn't break a rule, Harry." Harry relaxed, and Severus went on. "And now let's attach these photos to your collection on the wall."

## Chapter 23 – Stupid Ron

*Chapter 23 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.

Disclaimer: All recognizable characters belong to J.K. Rowling, and I am not earning anything by writing this story.

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## Chapter 23 Stupid Ron

"How was your meeting with your friends yesterday?" Severus asked while spooning his soup.

"Oh, it was good. Ron apologized for his reaction in the hospital wing. They liked my room, and Hermione brought me school work to catch up with," Harry told Severus enthusiastically.

"And what about your conversation with James?" Severus asked, eyeing Harry closely.

Harry sighed and stirred his soup indifferently with his spoon. "He gave me the applicator and spoke with Ron and Hermione about what to do when I get one of those damn attacks."

"They are not 'damn' attacks, Harry. Don't speak so disparagingly about you or your problems," Severus said, scolding.

"Yeah," Harry replied grumpily and spooned soup into his mouth.

"Anything else?" Severus asked.

"You already know. Why do you ask?" Harry asked sullenly.

"Because I want to hear it from you. And stop playing with your food, Harry!" Severus said acidly.

"Yes, sir," Harry, mumbled. He spooned soup in his mouth and then answered Severus' question in a small voice. "He also told me that I'm not allowed to play Quidditch."

"And how did you take that?"

Harry groaned. "I know that it could be dangerous during a game. It's very frightening to have these attacks. I don't want to have one while playing Quidditch and then let them all see what a fr..." Harry lowered his head. "Sorry."

"It's hard to give up old habits, but you have to understand that you aren't a freak, Harry. Your panic attacks aren't something to be ashamed of. You will learn to control them, but you have to accept them as a part of your life at the moment. Your friends will help you. I know flying is important for you, and we will find a way for you to go flying while one of us is present, but you will not go flying on your own. If I find out that..."

"I know, Severus," Harry said, annoyed.

"I hope so. And watch your tone," Severus said warningly.

"I'm sorry, but this is a topic that is really hard to accept. Maybe we should change it. What did James say? Are you healthy enough to go shopping?"

"What do you think?" Severus raised an eyebrow in question.

"I think you still look ill. For me it wouldn't be a problem to wait a few days."

"I'm perfectly fine. Stop racking your brain over me. We will leave at three," Severus said and took the next dose of James' potion.

"Mr. Ronald Weasley and Miss Hermione Granger ask to be let in," the front door announced.

Severus groaned. "You will finish your meal before you go into your room with them." He looked at Harry, who had already tried to stand up. Harry sat down again and grabbed his spoon to shovel the soup into himself at full speed. "Let them in, Charlee!" Severus ordered the door.

Ron and Hermione entered the living room cautiously.

"Come over here. Harry has to finish his meal first," Severus said to the two teenagers.

"Good day, sir," Hermione said politely.

"Yeah, eh... hello, sir," Ron said, unsure.

"Hello to you as well, Mr. Weasley," Severus said sarcastically while he motioned them to sit down.

"How are you, sir?" Hermione asked Severus.

Severus turned to face her and just glared at her.

"Ehm... Harry, how are you?" Hermione turned to face Harry. She immediately grimaced, seeing how Harry was eating. "Eww, Harry, have you changed into Ron? Why are you eating like a pig?"

"Because he wants to rescue you from my presence, Miss Granger," Severus said and glared at Harry.

"It's not like that. I just want to make use of the time they are here," Harry said defensively.

"And you cannot do that in my presence?" Severus raised his eyebrow.

"I thought you didn't want to have us around," Harry said, confused.

"To be honest, I would like to hear from Miss Granger how her Potions class was today." He looked curiously at the girl.

Hermione shifted nervously on her seat. "Professor Dumbledore said you would ask me this, and he told me to say that it is none of your concern, sir." Hermione looked as if she was preparing herself to run any minute to hide from a furious Potions master. Seeing his face, she quickly added, "I'm sorry."

Severus could hardly suppress his anger. *This old codger, how dare he to prepare her for a conversation with me? It's my dungeon and my Potions lab he is playing in!* At least tell me what you were brewing, Miss Granger. Maybe I could answer a few of the questions you surely have about it in return." Severus noticed seconds before a hand was placed on his shoulder that Hermione was staring at something, or someone, behind him.

"Nice try, Severus, but if you want to speak with someone about your Potions classes, it should be me." Severus groaned in frustration to hear the Headmaster's voice

behind him.

"Why don't you three go into Harry's room?" Dumbledore asked the children. "But not for long, Harry. You know James' instructions about..."

"Yes, I know, sir. I will do exactly what James said," Harry said quickly. Under no circumstances did he want to let his friends hear about his nap time. "Come on." He nearly pulled his friends in the direction of his room.

When they were almost there, Harry asked, "So what did you do in Potions?"

"Don't ask, Harry. We cooked and didn't brew," Hermione said disapprovingly.

"I liked it," Ron said as they entered Harry's room.

"Sure you did. You like everything that has to do with eating." Hermione rolled her eyes at Ron.

"So what did you brew... eh, cook?" Harry asked.

"Drops. All kinds of flavors, but Professor Dumbledore tried to convince us all to make lemon drops," Hermione explained.

"Wow, that's wicked," Ron said when he saw the photo wall.

Harry grinned proudly. He grabbed the drawing of the twins that he had laid on his desk and went over to Ron and Hermione, who sat on his bed and looked in awe at the photos.

"Remus gave them to me and then he showed me how to glue them to the wall. Look!" Harry glued the drawing on the wall on the long side of his bed. "I hope they will let me get some money from my vault to buy a camera. I want to add new photos, as well. Severus also offered to show me photos of my mom when she was young. He'll give me some, too," Harry said happily.

Ron grimaced. "It's really weird to hear you call him by his given name."

Harry sighed. He had hoped they were beyond this awkwardness. Why was it so hard for Ron to accept it all? "I can't call him Professor just in your presence. That's too confusing, Ron."

"Yeah, mate. I know, but it's still weird." Seeing Harry's sad face, he added, "Just ignore me. So, what have you planned for today. Will they let you out?"

Hermione was still studying the photos, but turned after hearing this question. She was interested in the answer as well.

"Ivy, Severus and I will go shopping this afternoon. I'm looking forward to it, but also feel a little unsure. Aunt Petunia never went shopping with me." Harry really was worried, but he didn't want to show it. He didn't want them to think he was weird.

"Even if your aunt would have gone shopping with you, it wouldn't help you with this. I've talked with Luna about it, and it is really different to the Muggle way of shopping. Even though I don't believe everything that she said. I mean, it is still Luna we are speaking about," Hermione explained.

"They want to pay for everything. That's really strange. I wish they would let me pay for myself," Harry said worriedly.

"That's what parents do, mate," Ron said while standing up and walking over to Quidditch poster to look at it. "And they are your new parents, aren't they?"

Harry was still thinking about what Ron had just said when Ron turned around abruptly. "Wow, are you still Harry Potter? Or are you Harry Snape now?"

Now Harry was really confused. He hadn't thought about it until now. He didn't know much about this whole guardianship thing. "As much as I know, they are my guardians. I don't think that my name has changed. They said I can still leave and choose another family to live with. So I'm still Harry Potter." Harry said this all, but he wasn't sure about it. *I have to ask Ivy and Severus a little more about this guardianship.*

Ron shrugged and turned to the poster again.

Hermione mentally slapped Ron for disturbing Harry with his question. Harry was obviously racking his brain over it now. "You can speak with them, Harry. They will explain the whole guardianship issue more clearly. Don't worry too much about it. You'll enjoy shopping," she told him and patted his leg.

Ron snorted and came over to the bed again. "Enjoy? He isn't a girl," Ron said to Hermione and then turned to Harry. "You'll be happy when it's over. We don't go shopping often, right? I wear the clothes of my brothers, but sometimes we do go shopping. Believe me, it's awful."

"Ron!" Hermione scolded. *How stupid can he be? Doesn't he see how much Harry is worried about this all?*

"What? It's the truth. All this collar adjusting here and prodding there." He gestured wildly to emphasize the meaning. "And all this in front of people in a shop. It's awful."

Harry was sitting open-mouthed and shocked on his bed. Shopping definitely wasn't something he would like. He was sure about it now *How the hell can I get out of it?*

Hermione jumped up and grabbed Ron by his arm. "Stop it, Ron. You're upsetting Harry."

"Oh!" Ron said. *Upsetting*, that word activated something in his brain. "Do you have your applicator?" He frantically went over to Harry and started to rummage in Harry's pockets.

Harry was still sitting shocked at the bed and his brain didn't catch up with Ron's actions. Hermione, meanwhile, pulled Ron away from Harry. "Ron, let him be. He doesn't need his applicator."

While Ron tried to free himself from Hermione, a sharp knock was heard and seconds later an irritated Potions master was standing in the room. "What's the problem?" Albus had just left, and Severus wanted to tell Ron and Hermione to leave Harry for his nap when he had heard shouting from the room.

"Nothing, sir. Ron is just overreacting," Hermione tried to explain, but Ron was still struggling with her.

"Harry needs his potion, but Hermione stopped me from getting it for Harry," Ron almost shouted. His face was red, and he looked angrily at Hermione.

Both teenagers were pushed unceremoniously to the side when a worried Potions master tried to reach Harry.

Finally, Harry came to his senses and noticed the scene in front of him. Severus reached him and pushed up his chin to examine him.

"I'm okay, Severus. I don't need a potion," he tried to explain.

"Then why does Mr. Weasley think that you need one?" Severus thought that Harry wanted to hide something, but couldn't figure out why Miss Granger was holding Mr. Weasley back.

Harry shook his head to clear it. "I don't know."

Severus turned to Ron. "What is all the fuss about, Mr. Weasley?"

"Hermione said he is upset. I thought we should give him the potion then?" Ron said, confused.

Harry groaned, frustrated, and threw himself at the bed. He grabbed for his cushion and pressed it in his face. *wish I could vanish right now. They think I'm crazy.*

Severus rolled his eyes. "Mr. Weasley, first, you will never give any potion to Harry. If he needs to use the applicator then it will be he who uses it. And second, this potion is for a panic attack, not for any negative emotion he may have. Is that clear now?" Severus was looking dangerously at Ron.

Ron couldn't answer verbally, so he just nodded.

"I think you'd better leave now. I was on my way to send you out anyway. I presume you will find your way out alone?" Severus asked angrily.

"Of course, sir," Hermione said and dragged Ron out of the room. "Bye, Harry," she called as she maneuvered Ron through the door frame.

When they had left, Severus turned to Harry. He rolled his eyes and sat down on the bed. "Take that off your face, Harry. I don't want to explain to Ivy why you choked in your bed when she comes to get you for the shopping trip." He pulled the cushion from Harry's grip.

"I don't want to go shopping anymore," Harry said, already preparing himself to be hit by eyeing Severus' movements cautiously.

James had told them to try physical contact as often as possible, and so Severus moved his hand to touch Harry's head, maybe a little too fast. Harry flinched away and closed his eyes. Severus' hand stopped in midair and then he drew it back. "I wasn't going to hit you, Harry. I just wanted to pat your head. I thought that would calm you." This was an awkward situation, and Severus hated to be in it. Why couldn't Ivy be there to handle the situation. Or James? He sighed when he saw Harry open his eyes cautiously. "I'm not good at this, I know, but you don't have to flinch away from me. Why the hell should I hit you?"

"Because I don't want to go shopping anymore," Harry said miserably.

"This morning you seemed to be looking forward to it. So what has changed? What have those dunderheads told you?"

"They are my friends," Harry said sullenly and sat up, hugging his knees.

"So, what have your *friends* said to you?" Severus said, annoyed.

Harry didn't know what to tell Severus, and so he just stared stubbornly at the wall.

"Oh, fantastic: Prince Gryffindor is above speaking with me," Severus spat. Now he really wished Ivy were there to take over. He felt the urge to shake Harry until the answer fell out, but he was sure that wasn't an adequate option right now.

"I'm not Prince Gryffindor," Harry said angrily. "I just don't want Ivy to force me into outfit after outfit and then prod at me until it fits."

First Severus looked at Harry as if he had grown two heads, and then he almost fell over from laughing. Harry was confused, but seeing Severus laugh made it hard not to start grinning. After a few seconds he gave in and grinned openly. Severus, meanwhile, was steadying himself with his hand on Harry's shoulder. "Oh yes, that's really scary. I wonder why you didn't have a panic attack about it." He could hardly manage to speak between all his laughing.

"Very funny, Severus," Harry said and rolled his eyes. "James said my panic attacks are nothing to make fun about."

"Oh, yes, you are right." Severus tried hard to control himself and to make a straight face. "Please don't tell James on me."

"If you convince Ivy not to pester me, I won't tell James," Harry said, grinning.

"Then I fear I will have to face James. Ivy will not give up the opportunity to pester you. I have to face this fate at least once a year, and so you have to face it as well. That's the destiny of the men in this family." He ruffled Harry's hair. "And now it is nap time. We don't want James to catch us acting against his order, do we? "

"Hmph," Harry said and sullenly made himself ready for his nap.

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Please review!

## Chapter 24 – The Shopping

*Chapter 24 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

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### Chapter 24 The Shopping

Harry looked around curiously. They were in a town he didn't know. Strimhedge, Ivy had said. They were heading for a big house which was colored in a rainbow colors.

Harry couldn't shake the questions of the guardianship and his name from his mind, and so he decided to ask Severus, who was striding right beside him. "Ehm, Severus, can I ask you a question?"

"If it isn't to ask Ivy to change her mind, go on," Severus said, without even looking at Harry. They must have looked odd to passers-by; Ivy was heading eagerly in the direction of the colorful house, surely already imagining what wonderful clothes she would buy for Harry, and Severus and Harry sullenly followed her. Severus would never

understand what it is with women and shopping. He could totally understand Harry's reluctance.

"I wondered about the guardianship," Harry said, craning his neck to look at Severus.

"What about it, exactly, Harry?" Severus asked, still facing the unbelievably colorful house with a look of pure disgust on his face.

"My name for example. Am I still Harry Potter?" Harry almost jumped when Severus stopped abruptly to face him.

"Who else should you be other than Harry Potter? What are you talking about? Are you feeling unwell? Are you delirious?" Severus reached for Harry's forehead to feel his temperature.

"Severus," Harry said, annoyed, while batting Severus' hand off his forehead. He rolled his eyes. "I'm feeling fine."

"What's wrong?" Ivy asked. She was standing a few meters away from them and had just realized that the two weren't following her any longer.

"Everything is just fine, Ivy," Severus said to his worried wife and then turned to Harry. He laid a hand on Harry's shoulder. "I think we need a little more time and privacy to discuss the guardianship. Let's finish the shopping, and then I will answer all your questions, okay?"

"Kay," Harry said and sullenly let Severus lead him by his shoulder in Ivy's direction.

When they entered the clothing shop, Harry looked around in awe. A tiny little witch came over to them immediately and addressed Ivy. "Good day, I'm Millisande Murasso, can I help you?"

"Thanks, we will choose a few clothes first, and then we would be glad to get your help. Could we please get a box?" Ivy asked the friendly lady.

"Certainly, my dear, here you are," the lady said, and a box floated over to Ivy.

"Thank you," Ivy said, and with a flick of her wand, the box was moving in the direction she was heading. She turned and looked at her companions. "What are you waiting for?"

Severus immediately hurried over to the customer lounge and grabbed one of the magazines there.

Harry glared after Severus for leaving him alone with Ivy. He could see Severus grin before he hid his face behind the magazine.

"Harry, come on. Over there is the teenagers' department," Ivy said, much too eagerly for Harry's taste.

"Trousers first, Harry." Ivy pulled him in front of a shelf with several pairs of trousers and jeans. "What do you prefer trousers or jeans?"

"Eh, jeans," Harry said and looked confusedly at the clothes. There was only one example of every style, no different sizes.

"Then choose three trousers and five jeans." Ivy started to look through the trousers.

Harry just looked at Ivy with shock and didn't move.

"Harry, at your pace we will still be here tomorrow." Ivy rolled her eyes and held a pair of trousers in front of Harry's legs. "If you don't start choosing for yourself, then I will do it." With that she threw the trousers in the box.

That shook Harry out of his stupor. "But that's too many. What will I do with so many trousers?"

Ivy sighed, annoyed. "Wear them, Harry? Really, I thought Severus was a difficult man while shopping, but you beat him at this."

Harry grabbed one of the pairs of jeans and looked at them. *They're jeans, what else should I look for?* He threw it in the box.

"Over there are jeans in a different style, Harry. Check if you would like to have one of them." Ivy pointed at another shelf.

Harry looked at them. The first pair were baggy. *I don't think that Severus would like me running around with jeans like this. And I also don't like them* He went to another shelf. Here he found straight jeans in different colors and took two black ones, a dark blue and one that had a washed out look. When he put them in the box with the other jeans, he asked Ivy, "What about the size?"

"Oh, you will see later, Harry." She looked through the jeans he had chosen and looked skeptically at the washed out one. Her disapproval was written all over her face.

"I can put it back," Harry said and reached for the jeans in Ivy's hand.

Ivy pulled it out of his reach and then put it back in the box. "If you like it, we will buy it. I don't have to like all your clothes." She took one of the pairs of trousers she had placed on a stack in front of her on the shelf. "Come over here, and let me test some of these."

Harry stood still in front of her as she put one pair of trousers after the other in front of his legs. What the hell was the different between them? They all looked the same to him. After what seemed like an eternity, Ivy had chosen two more, and Harry sighed, relieved.

Ivy looked reprovingly at him. "We have just started, Harry."

"Yeah, I know," Harry said sullenly while looking longingly at Severus, who was enjoying his magazine in the waiting lounge *That's so unfair*.

"Now shirts, Harry." She dragged him and the box to the proper area of the shop. "Six sweatshirts and twelve T-shirts," she ordered.

"I don't need twe..." Harry started to protest, but Ivy interrupted him.

"I don't want to hear it, Harry. Start choosing or I will choose and then it will be something like this." She held up a red T-shirt with a yellow duck on it.

That was all Harry needed to see, and he quickly started to look through the shirts and chose some. He even started to like it, because there were some cool shirts. For example, a black one with a silver dragon and another one with a Nimbus 2000 found their way into the box.

Seeing his choice of shirts, Ivy grabbed for a plain black and a plain white one and tossed them into the box as well.

After a single black and a lonely gray sock found their way into the box from Ivy, Harry chose one with Quidditch players at the hem and another with Grindylows. "Won't I need two of them?" Harry asked, confused that only one sock of each pair had found its way into the box.

"No, we will duplicate them later. You will see, Harry." Ivy had already moved over to the next shelf, and Harry sighed, frustrated *Merlin, let this be over soon!*

"Shoes, Harry. Here we find a pair because they are not the same for both feet." She explained this as if speaking to a small child. Harry was lucky that the other customers were too occupied to watch them. After Harry had picked out a few pairs of sneakers and cool flying shoes, which were made of a very flexible and smooth leather, even at the sole, Ivy put two pairs of conservative shoes, one black and one brown, in the box.

"And now follows the most important question. Boxers or briefs, Harry?" Ivy looked questioningly at him while stopping in front of the shelf with the underwear.

Harry blushed deeply as he quickly tossed three pairs of boxer shorts in the box.

Ivy rolled her eyes again. "At least twelve, Harry!"

Quickly, the ordered number of boxer shorts found their way into the box without a closer look. When Harry tried to pass Ivy to leave the embarrassing part behind him as fast as possible, Ivy blocked his way. She reached into the box and pulled out a pair of boxers with two fingers. "Are you sure you want this one?"

Harry blushed a deeper red than before. He could feel his face burn when he looked at the black boxer shorts with cute little white kittens all over it. Embarrassed beyond imagination he grabbed the shorts out of Ivy's hand and placed it back on the shelf.

"Over here are silken ones. Did you like Severus' silken boxer shorts?" Ivy asked while showing him the shelf.

"Oh," Harry only said and took five pairs of shorts out of the box and put five silken ones of different colors in it.

Ivy grinned. "You are so cute when you blush, Harry."

"Ivy," Harry said warningly.

Ivy looked at the contents of the box. "I think we have all the casual clothes. Let's move on to the robe department."

Harry groaned, frustrated. He had hoped that this would be the end of it.

"Behave, Harry, or I will let Mrs. Murasso loose on you." She turned without waiting for an answer and smiled when she noticed Harry following her sullenly.

Shopping for wizard robes was much easier. There wasn't much to choose from, and Ivy did it all for him. Soon the box was filled with two more school robes and two casual robes for indoor and outdoor.

"Okay, let's look for Mrs. Murasso," Ivy said, and turned to the waiting area. Seeing the full box, Mrs. Murasso was soon at their side. Severus also followed them when they headed for a door which led to the back of the shop. Harry looked around curiously. The room they entered had a small, round platform in the middle and a curtain on the right side of the room. Severus sat down on the couch near the platform.

"Okay, my boy, up on the platform. We will start with the robes." Mrs. Murasso lightly pushed him onto the platform while Harry looked for help from Severus.

Severus was grinning, even though the miserable look on Harry's face made him feel pity for the boy. Next time Ivy tried to drag Harry in here, he would surely give her quite a fight.

"Young man," the shop lady said, and handed Harry the school robes. "Put it on!"

Harry did what he was told. Mrs. Murasso waved her wand at him, pulled here and there at the robe, and finally looked at Ivy for approval. After Ivy nodded, the lady waved her wand and a nice folded robe appeared next to Severus on the couch. When Harry moved to hand the robe to the lady, it disappeared with a wave of her wand. He went through the same procedure with the other robes. Harry was already exhausted and more confused than before when they reached the shoes. The first pair were the black conservative ones Ivy had chosen. "They are too big," Harry said when the old lady passed the shoes to him to pull them on.

"Of course they are." The lady looked skeptically at Harry, as if she thought he wanted to be cheeky.

"It's his first time shopping at a magical clothing store, Mrs. Murasso," Ivy explained.

"Oh, dear, why didn't you tell me before? Just put them on, and you will see." Mrs. Murasso gave him a friendly smile.

Harry took the shoes reluctantly and put the first one on his foot. The moment he was in the shoe, it started to resize itself to fit. "Wow," Harry said, awed.

"The other one as well, Mr. Snape," Mrs. Murasso instructed.

Harry looked up, shocked, but before he could say anything, Ivy said, "It's Mr. Potter."

"Oh, really, I thought he was your son, Mrs. Snape. Potter?" The lady looked more closely at Harry. "Harry Potter?"

Harry rolled his eyes and groaned.

"Harry, stop behaving like that, and put on the second shoe," Ivy said sternly. That was the Ivy Harry tried to avoid as much as possible. Until now this kind of voice had only been directed at Severus, and Harry preferred it that way.

"Yes, ma'am," Harry said shyly, hoping to calm Ivy with this behavior.

Ivy rolled her eyes at being addressed like that. "Mrs. Murasso, we would like to finish all this as soon as possible. My husband is still quite ill, and we have to go back home soon."

Severus glared at his wife, and Harry snickered at the murderous look Severus shot at Ivy. The shoes fitted perfectly now, and after a wave of Mrs. Murasso's wand, the exact copy landed in front of Severus' feet. The same happened with the rest of the shoes. A shirt was tossed at Harry.

"Behind the curtain, young man, and when you are dressed, come out again," the shop lady ordered.

Harry returned to stand in front of them again with the new shirt that had started to fit itself on him the moment he had put it on.

"Do you like it like this, or do you want it to fit more closely or more loosely?" the lady asked.

"It's okay."

Mrs. Murasso waved her wand and all the T-shirts were copied to Harry's size. The self-fitting examples vanished, and Harry assumed they would find their way back to the shelf now. Soon the space beside Severus was occupied with shirts and trousers and socks. Now only the underwear was left, and Harry blushed again. *Oh, please don't let me have to stand in front of them in the boxers.*

Ivy grabbed for one of the silken ones and passed them to Harry. "Put it on and then call for Severus. He will help you with the fitting," Ivy said, to Harry's relief.

The boxers felt nice, but the fitting charm on them made them too tight for Harry's taste. He tried to pull at them to see if they would expand. The whole shopping trip had made Harry exhausted and on edge. Knowing that the others were standing on the other side of the curtain was an embarrassing thought. Harry didn't notice that he was starting to breathe faster and that sweat was forming on his forehead.

"What are you doing in there, Harry? Are you finished?" Severus asked impatiently.



"They don't fit." Harry started to panic about his embarrassment. *Oh, Merlin, he will come in and see me in these ridiculous tight boxers* His face felt like it was on fire, and his breathing became more panicky.

"That's what I will come in for, Harry." Severus was standing right in front of the curtain and so he could hear Harry's breathing. "I am coming in now, Harry."

Harry's breath was already coming with wheezing sounds. "Where is your applicator, Harry?" Severus moved over to the stack of Harry's clothes.

Ivy, hearing Severus' words, came through the curtain as well. She immediately went over to Harry, who was clawing at his throat. "Calm down, Harry." She gently pushed Harry down on the chair in the changing box. "Shhh, Harry. It will be over soon."

All the embarrassment was forgotten. The only thing that counted now was getting oxygen.

"Damn," Severus cursed, seeing how far Harry had worked himself up into an attack again. *Thank Merlin, the Dark Lord is dead already; how would the boy do facing him again when he gets a full panic attack about nothing but a pair of boxer shorts that do not fit*, Severus thought, worried. *What was James thinking, letting Harry leave the quarters so soon?* Severus went out to get the vial in his outer robes, which he had left on the couch.

"Do you need help? Shall I call for a Healer, Mr. Snape?" the shop lady asked worriedly.

"That's not necessary," Severus said shortly as he headed back behind the curtain with the vial in hand.

Harry's lips had already turned blue, and he looked as if he would pass out any second.

"Open up, Harry," Severus ordered. When Harry didn't react, Severus prised Harry's jaw apart and poured the potion into his mouth. "Swallow, Harry." With skilled hands, Severus massaged Harry's throat to help him swallow.

Ivy drew Harry's head to her chest and spoke in as calming a tone as she was capable of at the moment, which wasn't very calm at all. "Breathe, Harry." She drew calming circles on his back and cast a scared look at Severus when Harry started to sob.

"Harry, the potion will help you, but you have to try to calm yourself as well. It is over. You can breathe now, and there is nothing to cry about," Severus said calmly as he stroked Harry's hair.

"I'm sorry," Harry said miserably. He felt so embarrassed that he had gotten a panic attack over shorts that didn't fit *How sick am I? I'm such a burden*. Harry felt the potion trying to fight against these negative thought and feelings. It was as if the potion tried to push him to the surface of his mind and stop him from diving too deeply into his negative thoughts.

Severus shook his head. "He is fighting the potion. We need someone with healing magic." Hearing that made Harry sob even harder.

*I'm a total freak*, he thought, disgusted at himself. He didn't see Severus' Patronus vanish through the curtain.

"Harry, you must breathe more calmly and let the potion take over!" Merlin, it was only a few minutes, and Harry had gotten himself so deeply into the attack that not even his potion helped. *And this is what James called great improvement? Harry will never make it through the school year without killing himself* Severus was worried, and when Albus emerged he was so deep in thoughts that at first he didn't notice him.

Harry felt the potion being pushed violently through his blood system by an unknown force. The same force pulled him to the surface of his thoughts, and then he could feel the warm and relaxing healing magic of Albus. He leaned tiredly into Albus' chest while the old wizard pulled him onto his lap. "Shhh, Harry, everything is fine now. Just breathe calmly, and let the magic flow through your body." Albus' calm monotone voice soothed Harry, and he started to feel the hand that was on his chest now, and also the one on his head. He was back in the real world. And back came the memories.

Harry groaned in embarrassment, even when Albus' magic and Severus' potion made it impossible to go deep into this feeling. "I'm sorry."

"There is nothing to be sorry about. You had a long and exciting day, didn't you?" Albus said in his cheerful voice again. Harry was still leaning into the old wizard's chest with his eyes closed, and so he didn't see the worried look Albus gave his daughter and son-in-law. They looked shaken, but needed to regain their control soon, because they couldn't let Harry see them like that.

Severus found his voice first and said, a little shaken, "Maybe you should pack up the clothes, Ivy. We will finish here, and then we can head home."

That gave Ivy a good reason to compose herself out of sight of Harry, and she took it gratefully.

"Oh, no," Harry said miserably, hearing that the shopping trip was canceled because of his behavior. He opened his eyes to look at Severus. "I promised the twins I'd bring something for them, and I wanted to get money from my vault to buy a camera, and..."

"Stop it, Harry. You are exhausted, and we will go back to Hogwarts. The twins will understand, and you can buy something for them during your trip with Albus, Minerva and the twins to Diagon Alley this weekend. And I refuse to explain the vault sealing to you again, Harry. We will speak about the camera later. Now we have to get you back into bed."

Harry hid his face in Albus' chest in frustration. This made him aware of where he was sitting at the moment, and he blushed again. "Oh, Merlin." He struggled to get off Albus' lap.

"No, Harry, not now. First, I want you to breathe very calmly," Albus said sternly.

Harry tried hard to fulfill Albus' order just to be allowed to jump off his lap.

"That will get you nowhere, Harry," Albus said, scolding when he felt Harry fighting to force himself to breathe calmly. "You have to relax." Albus increased the calming magic a little, and Harry slumped in his chest with a sigh.

The exhausted feeling laid over him like a thick blanket. All he wanted to do was sleep, even if it was in his boxers on Albus' lap. His breathing became calm and even. When Albus lessened the magic flow, Harry groaned in protest.

"Come on, Harry," Severus said while lifting the boy up under his armpits.

Harry woke up fully when he was stood, swaying slightly, in front of his guardian. All his senses back, he grabbed for the boxers again and started to pull at the fabric.

"Stop that," Severus said as he batted Harry's hand away. He waved his wand, and Harry felt the boxers loosen. "Better?"

Blushing again, Harry nodded. The nodding wasn't a good idea. A wave of exhaustion came over him again, and he was grateful when he felt Severus' hand steady him by his shoulder. He didn't notice Severus waving his free hand to copy the boxer size for the boxers outside in the box. He hardly registered Albus moving behind him, and when he felt Albus lowering the example shorts to his knees, he hadn't the energy to protest. Soon both men had dressed him completely. Severus waved his wand at Harry to make him lighter and then lifted him in his arms. "Let's go home, Harry."

An exhausted moan was all the answer Severus got from the almost sleeping teenager.

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Please review!

## Chapter 25 – End of the Guardianship

*Chapter 25 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

*Disclaimer: All recognizable characters belong to J.K. Rowling, and I am not earning anything by writing this story.*

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### Chapter 25 End of the Guardianship

"You are a disgusting freak, Potter! Get out of my quarters! How could I think you would be worthy to live with me and my family? You disgust me!" Severus spat at Harry, who cowered in front of his feet.

"I'm sorry, sir. Really! Please don't send me away," Harry pleaded helplessly.

"Sorry? Do you believe that changes anything? You disgraced our family in that shop. The whole world is speaking about it. You are nothing but a weak freak." With that he grabbed Harry's hair and dragged him to the door.

"No, please. I'm sorry." Harry whined and tried to ease the pain of the pulled hairs by grabbing after Severus' hands.

"Please, don't throw me out. I will be good. I promise."

"You are nothing but a freak, Potter. I want you out of my sight and away from my family." He had dragged Harry to the door and now let go of his hair. When the door opened, Harry could see nothing but blackness. They didn't want him anymore. He had screwed it up because of a damn pair of boxer shorts. He looked into the blackness that awaited him with tear-filled eyes. Severus grabbed his shoulder to push him out, but he didn't let go and instead started to shake him.

"Harry, Harry!"

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Please, please don't send me away." Harry sobbed.

"Harry, wake up."

Wake up? Harry realized that Severus had called him Harry and not Potter. His voice also was not harsh and bitter as before but softer and *worried*.

"Wake up, Harry. It's just a nightmare. You are safe here. Come on, open your eyes," Severus instructed the sobbing boy while shaking his shoulder.

Slowly, Harry opened his eyes. He could see the blurred face of Severus right in front of his own. He backed away and covered his head with his arms.

"It was just a nightmare, Harry. It's over. Please calm down," Severus said calmly. He was relieved that Harry had finally woken up. It had taken him quite some time to get him awake. What he had heard while he tried to wake the thrashing and screaming boy worried him a lot. He slowly touched Harry's shoulder. After two attempts, Harry stopped flinching away.

"It's okay, Harry. Nobody is sending you away. It was just a dream."

"I'm sorry," Harry said, between sobs.

"Come here, Harry." He cautiously dragged Harry onto his lap and encircled him with his arms. "Shh, it's over. There is nothing to be sorry about or scared about, Harry." He had the feeling the name Harry was coming out of his mouth like a mantra, but he was sure that Harry needed to hear him using his first name as often as possible to wake fully from his nightmare.

Finally, Harry realized that it was all a dream. He clung to Severus and didn't try to tell him how sorry he was. He buried his face in Severus' chest, so he wouldn't see what a baby he was. *I must look like a real ninny.*

"Like I said, there is nothing to be sorry about. Do you want to tell me about your dream?" He damn well knew what the dream was about. Harry had been very vocal while he was thrashing like hell on the bed. Severus knew from experience that it was good to speak about nightmares, and so he hoped Harry would open up.

Harry shook his head. "It was horrible." At least he had stopped crying, but he didn't stop burying his face in Severus' chest.

Severus rummaged in his pocket and took out a fresh handkerchief. "Here, Harry."

Harry took the handkerchief and first cleaned his face, then blew his nose. While he pocketed it, he said, "I will buy you a new one."

"You are welcome to keep it. You don't have to buy me a new one," Severus said softly, but couldn't resist rolling his eyes.

Harry noticed that he was sitting on Severus' lap and wriggled free. "I'm too old for this." He blushed and sat down beside Severus. The scary feeling that had captured him after the bad dream had vanished completely. Now the embarrassment over being such a baby as to cry over a nightmare took over.

"You are never too old for a hug, Harry. Especially when you are scared," Severus said convincingly.

"Yeah, scared over a dream," Harry said sullenly.

"A nightmare, not just a dream. Nobody can control his feelings while he dreams. There is nothing to be embarrassed about. I had many nightmares myself and also have

been woken up screaming and scared."

Harry looked straight into Severus' face. There was no sign of mocking in Severus' expression. He meant it all seriously. "And has someone seen you like this?" He gestured at his own face. "Crying like a baby?"

"Yes, many people saw me like that. I fear even more than have seen you. But I don't like to be called a crying baby by anyone, especially not you." He raised an eyebrow.

Harry's mouth dropped open when he realized what Severus meant. "Oh, I didn't mean you. I meant... I..." he stuttered helplessly.

"Then you shouldn't think about yourself as a crying baby either." He patted Harry's head and softly pushed it against his shoulder. Harry didn't resist. It felt good to lean against Severus. Seeing that Harry didn't complain, Severus went on. "I have learned that speaking about my dreams lowers the risk that they haunt me another time. It takes a lot of courage and someone you trust to speak about it. I know you are brave enough. Braver than any other boy your age, Harry; but am I someone you can trust to speak to about your dream?"

Harry leaned a little more into Severus. "It was about you," he whispered, almost inaudibly.

"What exactly about me?" Severus encouraged Harry to continue.

Harry sighed and then told Severus about the whole dream. It felt good to speak about it, and it lost its scariness a little. Now and then, he looked up into Severus' face and saw that he was looking seriously at him, and that encouraged him to tell Severus everything. In the end he sighed and felt relieved when Severus drew him into another hug.

While he hugged Harry and softly stroked his hair, Severus said, "We would never throw you out, Harry. Quite the contrary. We want to adopt you, Harry, not just be your guardians. We didn't want to push you into a decision, and I only told you about it now to show you how much you mean to us, not to pressure you at all."

Seeing Harry looking up at him, astonished, he added, "We will speak about this later, but first I want to say some more things. You are no freak, Harry. I don't know what we can say or do that will make you finally realize this. You are a normal teenager who just had a great burden on his shoulders and damn horrible guardians, Harry. You will cope with what you have gone through, and one day you can be as jolly or rebellious as any other average teenager. You just have to give yourself time to heal and stop pressuring yourself. If someone made a mistake yesterday, then it was us. We went overboard on the whole shopping trip. You were very exhausted, and we should have noticed."

Severus sighed, "We all have to learn, Harry, not only you. James assured me that it was okay for you to get an attack after such a long and exhausting afternoon. You just have to learn to notice the signs of an attack starting and use your applicator. We shouldn't have let you out of sight. You will stay the rest of the week here with me, and on the weekend, you can go to Diagon Alley with Albus, Minerva and the twins. On Monday, you can start going to classes again if you feel like it. You will be okay, Harry."

Severus looked Harry deep in his eyes. He could see tears forming in them again, and so he pulled the boy to his chest.

"I would never hurt you, Harry. You are safe here. You are already a part of our family. We love you like a son." It surprised Severus how easily the words had come from his lips.

"Can we talk about the adoption thing now?" Harry asked carefully, not taking his face out of Severus' robes.

"If you want... What did you want to know yesterday?" Severus asked.

"Yesterday?" Harry's head emerged from Severus' chest, and he looked at the window, confused. It was charmed to show the weather outside even though they were in the dungeons. It was bright and sunny. "Have I slept that long?"

"We brought you home, and James checked on you. A sleeping spell let you sleep until now. It's ten in the morning; I am sure that would have been your next question."

Harry grinned. "Maybe you are related to this Charlee Seer on the door?"

Severus laughed. "Oh, Merlin, no. You want to hear the story about her?"

Harry nodded eagerly.

"Minerva is not very fond of the subject of Divination. Like our Professor Trelawney, almost all Trelawneys are Seers. Charlee Trelawney had gone to school with Minerva, and to put it mildly, she didn't like her. So once when we had a row, I put that face on the door. It's not like a painting; it doesn't inherit any character traits or memories. Only the face and the voice are like the person, but it's just a charm. If I wanted I could change the face to any other person I choose."

Severus grinned at Harry. "But I don't want to."

"That's wicked," Harry said, grinning back at Severus.

"What do you think about something to eat?"

"We haven't spoken about the guardianship and the adoption thing." Harry wanted to know all about it now.

"Okay, but after we speak about it, you will eat a full breakfast. Deal?"

"Deal," Harry said, happy that Severus didn't force him to eat first.

"Right now, we are your guardians. The problem is that the Ministry still has the ability to intervene in many things. Like your health care, your education, and more. Only Albus' high influence in the Ministry makes it possible for us to take you in. I don't want to lie to you, Harry. The Ministry still wants you in St. Mungo's. We won't let them take you away from us; but like I said, they have great influence. They can demand a therapy progress record from James at any time." Seeing Harry's shocked face, he added, "Of course, James would never tell the Ministry or anyone else what you two talk about without your permission. They only get a report about your physical and psychological health progress, and if you are working together..."

Harry almost jumped out of the bed. "But I'm not getting better! What if they really take me away to St. Mungo's?" He breathed heavily and frantically ran to his clothes, lying on a chair beside his bed. When he found the applicator, he used it and instantly felt much better. His heartbeat calmed down, and he could breathe freely. Exhausted, he sat down on the bed.

"I think you just proved yourself wrong, Harry," Severus said calmly.

"What do you mean?" Harry asked, puzzled.

"That was the first time that you realized by yourself when to use the inhaler. That is quite some progress. I'm sure James, Ivy and the rest will be as proud as I am when they hear this."

Severus smiled at Harry and ruffled his hair. Seeing Harry smiling proudly back, he went on with his explanations. "They will not get you away from us even if you never make any progress. We wouldn't let them take you, but we have to ask their permission for many things. For example when we want to spend the holidays at our Mansion, or want to decide something about your education. That makes it difficult. Therefore, we would like to adopt you. Emotionally, it wouldn't make any difference to us, but it would make things easier. We see you as our son, no matter if we remain as your guardians or become your adoptive parents. It's important that you know this."

"I don't want the Ministry to interfere. I would like the adoption," Harry said, not daring to look up in Severus' face. "What will happen with my name?"

"That is up to you, Harry. It can stay Potter or you can change it to Snape. It makes no difference to us. You had loving parents who gave you your name; unfortunately, they are dead. This name, some photos, and memories from other people are all you still have of them. It is absolutely understandable if you want to keep this connection to your parents. We don't mind at all." Severus meant every word he said. He didn't want Harry to feel bad about it. If he had been in Harry's place, he would choose to keep his name.

"I would like to keep my name if that is really okay with you all," Harry said shyly.

"It is, Harry." Severus smiled and stood up. "And now it's time to keep your part of the promise. A full breakfast before James shows up at noon."

With that they both left for the living room. Severus was relieved that now he wouldn't have to constantly battle with the Ministry and that Harry had opened up to him. Harry was relieved to have a real family and also that Severus had listened to him. He was especially happy that Severus was proud of him for using the applicator in time. Maybe his life really would start to become normal.

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 26 – Talking with James

*Chapter 26 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

*Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Orodruin and AmyLouise, for correcting my mistakes.*

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### Chapter 26 Talking with James

"I'm very proud of you, Harry," James said while he was sitting with Harry on his bed. "You learn fast."

"Yeah, yeah, I'm sure they told you all about the shopping trip, James. I hadn't learned much at that moment, and I can't even remember why I was looking for the applicator this morning," Harry said grumpily. He was still very embarrassed about the shopping incident and felt that he should at least have noticed the panic attack coming. The problem was he hadn't. He hadn't realized that he was in trouble until Severus was looking frantically for his applicator and he started to choke.

"Maybe it was on instinct or maybe it was experience, but you used it, Harry. That's all that counts," James said calmly. Seeing that Harry didn't respond and just looked down at his hands in his lap, James added, "You are not the only person with problems like this, and some need more time to notice the signs and some less. You shouldn't pressure yourself so much."

"I want them to stop. I don't even know why I have them." Harry punched his cushion and then drew it to his chest to hug it.

"They won't stay forever, but at the moment, you should accept them as a part of your life. There is nothing bad or embarrassing about them. I know they are scary, but you know that the potion will help you, and if it is too late for it, there is always someone near you who can help you with magic. Sometimes we have to trust people to take care of ourselves, Harry. I know it is hard for you after your experience with your relatives, but now you have a real family. You can trust them to take care of you. Severus, Ivy and Albus took good care of you in the shop, didn't they?"

Harry sighed and hugged the cushion tighter. To feel more safe, he drew up his knees and captured the cushion between them and his chest. James let Harry have his little sanctuary, but he didn't like that Harry felt the need to calm himself in this way. "Yes, they did, but I always feel so stupid when they do it. I don't want to be a burden to them." He sighed and rested his chin on his knees.

"You are not a burden to them, Harry. It's normal that parents take care of their children, and they are your new parents now. If you had to take care of Ivy or Severus while they were ill, would you feel it as a burden?"

"Of course not. I'd like to help them feel better," Harry explained. "But they wouldn't let me."

"They would avoid it if possible, Harry, but only because you are a child, and children shouldn't have the responsibility of taking care of an adult. If you could choose, would you like to be helped by the twins or by Ivy and Severus if you are ill?"

Harry snorted and rolled his eyes. "Ivy and Severus, of course."

"Why not the twins. Don't you like them?" James still spoke in his calm voice.

Harry's head jerked up from his knees. "Of course I do. I like them, but I'm the big brother, and so they shouldn't..." He stopped when he realized what James wanted to show him with this. Sighing, he rested his head again on his knees. "I understand."

"What if one of the twins were ill? Would you help to take care of them?"

"Sure, I'm older than them. It would be okay for me to help them." He rested his head sideways on his knees so that he could look at James, who sat beside him.

"Yes, it would be okay, but wouldn't it be a burden to look after them?"

Harry sighed and stared past James' face at the wall. "Is this another therapy session?"

James smiled. "You are very smart, Harry."

"No, I just learn fast." Harry smiled while looking at James. "I understand what you wanted to say. It's still hard to believe that they don't think it's a burden when I make so

much trouble. Severus told me what they think about me, and that they love me and want to adopt me. I just don't understand why." He sighed again to make space for a big breath he needed to tell the next thing. "I know it's stupid, but deep inside I still fear that they will throw me out if I get too troublesome." Harry turned his head again and hid it in his arms, now crossed over his knees.

"It's okay to feel like this, Harry, but this fear is unjustified. They have known you since you came here for your first year, and Severus even knew your parents. They really care for you, and they would do much more, if necessary, than they do already. You are good for them, too." Seeing Harry shift his head again to face him, he went on more confidently. "Severus enjoys having you here because he would like to teach you more about Potions. He is a little taken aback by the lack of interest from the rest of the family of something he thinks is so important."

"It is important. You can do almost everything with potions, and a potion is easier to hide than a charm or hex. It gives you many more possibilities, and you can experiment with all the ingredients and always manage to get something new. Did you know that each day at least thirty new potions or new variations of already existing potions are invented? Isn't that amazing?"

James chuckled. "See what I mean? Severus would love to hear you say something like this." He paused to watch Harry's features. "Ivy is just a mother, *par excellence*. She loves to take care of anyone who is willing to let her. Taking care of you makes her happy. Women are sometimes hard to understand, but believe me, the more she can take care of you the happier she is. I don't have to tell you how important you are for the twins, but I will do it nevertheless. They have to grow up surrounded by adults and their godfather and godmother are also very old people in their eyes. They love Alastor and Poppy, but they still need a young role model. You are the perfect candidate for it, and as much as I have seen and heard, they already cling to you. So I would say you pay them back very well, if you need to see it like that to feel better. But you don't have to pay them anything back, Harry. They do it because they started to love you and see you as a part of their family."

Harry really felt a little better after hearing all this. He uncoiled himself, took the cushion and leaned it against the wall. "Severus said they will adopt me."

"Yes, he told me about it. He also told me that you agreed this morning," James said without judging Harry's decision.

"Have you already given a report about me to the Ministry?" Harry asked shyly.

"Yes, they have ordered two, already."

"Two?" Harry asked, shocked.

"They want to know of any progress you make. As long as Severus and Ivy only have guardianship over you, I have to follow their orders," James explained. "Of course, they just get a report about the general facts, not about what we talk about, Harry."

"Severus already told me, but I don't like it even when they just get the general facts." Harry drew his knees to his chest again. "They never cared to check on me while I was with the Dursleys, and now, when I don't need their help, they intervene in my life and try to boss me around," Harry said sadly.

"This will end soon, Harry. You are troubling your head about things that you know will already change for the better soon. Don't make your life harder than necessary."

*Time to change the topic*, James thought. "Let's speak about the shopping. I've heard Ivy couldn't control herself. Does all that stuff even fit in your cupboard?" James smiled when Harry jumped up to open the cupboard.

"I have clothes for the next fifty years," Harry said while opening the cupboard. "I have no idea when I shall wear all this."

Now James laughed openly. "Another miracle about women, Harry. As unbelievable as it is for us, Ivy really enjoyed buying all this, and I bet she even tried to restrain herself."

"Restrain herself?" Harry asked while gesturing to the jam-packed cupboard.

"Like I said, a miracle I fear we will never understand. Please, come over here again, Harry. I would like to speak with you about school."

"Oh, no beating around the bush this time?" Harry asked cheekily while sitting down on the bed again.

"If you prefer it the other way I can..."

"No, no. Just tell me what exactly you want to speak about." Harry sprawled unceremoniously on the bed. James preferred it this way over the withdrawn, coiled-together form in the beginning of his session.

"I would like to know if you feel ready to start classes on Monday."

"Yes, I think so. I'm just a little scared that I will get one of those attacks..." He paused to gather his thoughts. "And I'm a little nervous about how the others will react over my new living situation. The Slytherins will be mad that Severus took me in, and I'm not sure what my friends in Gryffindor will say. Hermione and Ron are my best friends, and even they had to think about it before accepting it."

"It is not a secret that you are living here, Harry. So your friends have had a lot of time to think about it already. I cannot promise you that they will all react positively, but as long as you are sure that living here is a good thing, you will make them see reason."

"Yeah, I think so," Harry said, unconvincingly.

"How about your energy, Harry? Do you think you can attend a whole school day, or shall we choose some classes which are most important and skip some others?"

"I don't want to get special treatment. It would make everything more difficult. I think I can manage a full school day." Harry was not sure about this. He often felt very exhausted without knowing why, but he didn't want to look weak. It would be hard enough to explain why he couldn't attend classes this week. Having to explain why he was still weak would be worse, and Harry didn't even have an answer to it.

"Okay, we will try, but I want you to leave your classes if you feel too exhausted. Your teachers will be informed about your condition..." Harry tried to argue with James.

"No, Harry, this doesn't call for discussion. They are your teachers and have to know about your health problems. There is no reason for denying your problems, Harry. We already told you that the Daily Prophet made it public that you have been abused by your relatives, and that you now live with the Snapes and Dumbledores."

They had told him shortly after he left the hospital wing. At that moment Harry had been so overwhelmed by all the new impressions that he didn't give it a second thought. Now it hit him full face. Everyone knew about the Dursleys and why he was here now. So there was no need for thinking up an excuse for his one-week absence. He just had to deal with all the questions about his past and his life with the Snapes when he met the others again.

Harry was surprised how little this made him panic. Of course, he hated that everyone knew about what his relatives did to him. It was private and nothing the whole world should know, but Harry couldn't change it. Ron and Hermione knew already, and they would stand at his side all the time. "Yes, I remember. There will be a lot of questions." Harry groaned, frustrated. "Why can't my life be easier?"

"Again, something you can't change and shouldn't trouble your head about, Harry," James said in his calm voice.

Suddenly, the doorknob flared green and started to vibrate. Harry jumped up and ran to the door. When he remembered that he wasn't alone in the room, he faced James. "Ehm...Hermione and Ron wanted to come by. May I open the door for them?"

"Sure, just go and bring them in," James said while waving his hand to gesture Harry to leave and open the door.

Harry smiled and ran to the front door, which announced the visitors when it saw Harry coming.

To Harry's surprise, it wasn't Ron and Hermione who were announced by the door.

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Please review!

## Chapter 27 - The Twins

*Chapter 27 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 27 - The Twins

Harry stopped in front of the door and listened, stunned, to what it was announcing. He had been waiting for Hermione and Ron, but that wasn't what the door announced.

"Mr. Fred Weasley and Mr. George Weasley ask to be let in," the door stated a second time when Harry only stood open-mouthed in front of it.

Harry had totally forgotten about the Weasley twins. The first day at Hogwarts, he had been so disappointed that they had spoken so little with him, and then he had forgotten them during all the new things happening here. "Ehm...open up," Harry ordered the door.

"Happy to..." Fred began.

"See us, Harry?" George ended.

"Ehm... yeah," Harry said, still a little stunned.

"Hmm, Fred, it seems our Potions partner is not very happy to see us."

"Yeah, it seems so." George rounded Harry. "But why?"

"Er... I have been a little distracted lately, you know, and I just didn't think that you would show up," Harry tried to explain.

"But we have, right?" Fred asked.

"So, will you show us around?" George asked while already going further into the quarters and looking around with interest.

"I'm not sure if that is such a good idea. I'll go and tell Severus that you're here," Harry said, already feeling uneasy with the twins, who seemed to be very relaxed around here—too relaxed.

"Oh, it's Severus now? So when will we be able to use his lab? Have you already nagged him about it?" George asked and threw his arm around Harry's shoulders.

"Please don't speak so loud, or I will be in trouble," Harry said, getting more and more nervous.

"Oh, come on, old Snapey won't hear us," Fred said, coming over to Harry after inspecting the room.

"Old Snapey has already heard enough." Severus' baritone was to be heard while he came down the stairs. "And old Snapey wants to talk with you two cretins before you speak with Harry." Severus looked warningly at the Weasley twins and then turned to Harry. "And you, young man, still have company in your room, haven't you?"

"Yes," Harry said in a small voice.

"Then don't make James wait. I will send these two to your room when I'm through with them," Severus said and gestured in the direction of Harry's room.

Harry gulped and looked worriedly at the twins. To Harry's surprise they didn't look worried or scared. They just grinned at him. "We'll see you later, Harry."

"Kay." With that Harry went back to his room and James.

---

James had left a few minutes ago, and Harry had dragged his Potions journal out of his trunk. He flipped through the last few sheets to distract himself. Fred and George had been with Severus for over fifteen minutes now. *What the hell is he doing with them?*

He jumped when the twins came in without knocking. "So, what are you doing?" It was George who spoke and threw himself beside Harry on the bed.

"The shrink's gone already?" Fred asked.

Harry blushed. What they said reminded him that everyone knew about his problems. "I would prefer if you wouldn't call Healer Smith that. And if I come back to classes again, please don't shout around that I have to speak with a Healer."

"Why? The whole school already knows," George said as he propped himself up on his elbows.

Seeing Harry's shocked face, Fred added, "Calm down, Harry. Most were shocked that you didn't tell them, and they feel so guilty that they won't ever bring it up to you. And the Slytherins won't dare to say anything now that you are a Snape. So you don't have to worry."

"Merlin, Harry, can you see the possibilities that we have now that you live here?" George asked, and looked dreamily at the ceiling after he had thrown himself down on his back again.

"I can call myself lucky if Severus lets me brew together with him in his private lab. I don't think he would be thrilled to know what we are working on." Harry held his Potions journal up.

"Oh, he knows that we are good, and he also knows what we are brewing. Putting one and one together, he must know that you are in on it as well," Fred said, and went over to the photos. "Wow, is that your mom? She's hot."

"Was hot," Harry said, annoyed and a little hurt.

"Yeah; sorry, mate. She looks quite young in this one." Fred pointed at one of the photos Severus had given him.

"Severus gave it to me. My mom is sixteen in that photo. She and Severus were friends."

"Really," George said and turned on the bed to have a look at it as well. "That's wicked."

"What was he talking with you about?" Harry asked to change the topic. The twins weren't people he wanted to speak about his parents with.

"Ah, just the usual stuff: don't do something ridiculous," Fred explained.

"Or dangerous," George added.

"Or stupid," Fred ended, and rolled his eyes. "Just a little more determined because now he has to fear for you and not just for us."

"The usual stuff? So he has talked with you about your potions before?" Harry was surprised.

"Sure. He knows what we're doing. He always says he prefers to know what we are working on, so he has the fitting antidote at hand," George said, grinning. "He is really cool, Harry. You just have to know how to deal with him. A little lying here..."

"A little showing respect there..." Fred went on.

"And an ounce of truth, and you have the bat of the dungeon as your pet," George said.

"He will kill you if he hears you talking about him like that. And I also don't like it when you speak like that about my adoptive father," Harry said, a little annoyed. He respected Severus and letting them speak about him like that made him feel as if he was betraying Severus.

"Wow, already defending your new family. Come on, cool down, we respect your new father, okay?" Fred assured Harry.

"And you can't imagine how *glad* we are that you are now a Snape." George sat up and ruffled Harry's hair. "So, how about sneaking into his library and seeing what we can find?"

"How about letting me survive at least a few weeks without getting into trouble? They haven't even signed the adoption papers yet."

"As if they wouldn't sign them if you get into trouble. You should have seen Snape as he spoke with us. You'd think you really are one of his. He threatened to skin us alive and use our skin as potions ingredients if we hurt you. He looked really worried," Fred told Harry.

A warm feeling spread through Harry's chest as he heard this, but he was abruptly pulled out of the wonderful feeling when the doorknob flared green again and started to sir.

"That must be Ron and Hermione." Harry jumped up and ran to the entrance door.

Again the door did not announce Hermione and Ron. It was only one person, and Harry definitely wasn't looking forward to meeting this one.

## Chapter 28 – Getting Into Trouble

*Chapter 28 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 28 Getting into trouble

Harry briefly thought about not opening the door, but he feared Severus would get mad about it.

"Potter!"

"Malfoy!" Harry spat back with the same venom that Draco had used.

Draco strode arrogantly into the room, brushing Harry violently on his way.

"What do you want?" Harry asked, annoyed.

"Why should I tell you? It's not as if you belong here, Potter. You are just a parasite, who takes advantage of the kindness of Severus and Ivy." Draco came closer to Harry to spit his next words directly in his face. "Playing the poor abused baby to trick them to take you in out of pity, Potter. You disgust me."

Harry was shocked. Each word was like a stab with a dagger in his heart. He shied away from the blond boy. "It's not like that."

"It's exactly like that, you pity seeker. You are nothing but a crying baby. The Prophet has reported about *Poor Potter* every day. Poor Potter let his relatives hit him. The Snapes take pity and take Poor Potter in. Poor Potter breaking down crying in a shop for making people laugh about the Snapes. How does it feel to make a family the laughing-stock of the wizarding world, Potter?"

Harry could not think straight for a moment. The words were ringing in his head. It was just what he had thought the whole time. Severus had taken away some of his fears when he had spoken with him this morning, but now they were back full force. He could feel his chest tighten and his breathing become harder. Frantically, he grabbed for his applicator and used it.

"What's that, Pottybaby?" Draco asked and knocked it out of Harry's hands. "You weak little freak."

Harry didn't know why, maybe these last words put him over the edge. He struck out and hit Draco's chin full force.

Draco fell back and clutched his chin. Blood was oozing from his mouth and through his fingers.

Harry was shocked and paralyzed for a few seconds, but then the fear kicked in and he ran. He ran as fast as he could out of the door and into the halls. He had screwed up. They would first beat him like hell and then throw him out. The castle wasn't safe any longer. He couldn't stand a beating from them. He didn't like the Dursleys, and so it wasn't so hard to take a beating from them, but the Snapes he liked, maybe even loved, if he were truthful. Never could he stand their disappointed faces and their hateful beating. And so he ran as fast as he could in the direction of the entrance door.

He had run for a few minutes when he ran around corner and collided with someone. First the person was puzzled and wanted to help him up, but when he realized the state Harry was in and that he was fighting to get free, he tightened his grip. Alastor Moody didn't know what had happened, but he knew that Harry needed to calm down. So he grabbed Harry from behind and pressed Harry's back against his chest. "Calm down, Harry!"

"No, let me go!" Harry screamed, and fought like hell. He tried to pry Alastor's strong arm away from his torso with no success. Slowly, Alastor steered Harry into a quiet classroom.

Alastor took a chair, sat down and positioned Harry on his lap. He caught Harry's legs with his, held him tightly by his waist, and with his free hand he pulled Harry's head slightly backwards against his shoulder.

Harry's arms were captured by the arm Alastor had wound around his torso, and so Harry was totally paralyzed. He couldn't move an inch.

"Calm down so that we can speak about what caused all this, Harry!" Alastor commanded, but in a gentle and calm voice.

"Please, let me go," Harry said miserably. He felt vulnerable in this position, but at the same time, safe and cared for and, most important, not alone. These feelings confused him, and soon tears were running down his cheeks.

"Have you taken your potion, Harry?" Alastor asked when he felt the boy stop struggling.

"Yes," Harry said between sobs.

"Okay, I will let go of your head now. If you start struggling again, you will be in this position again. Do I make myself clear?" Alastor asked with calm determination.

"Yes," Harry replied again between sobs. When Alastor released his head, he let it sink onto his chest. "Please, let me go." He weakly tried to free his arms.

"Not now, Harry, and remember what I told you about struggling again."

Harry stilled and waited for the scolding that would surely follow.

"So, what caused this, Harry? Tell me what happened," Alastor ordered.

"I can't," Harry said. His chest hurt, just by thinking about what happened a few minutes ago, and imagining what would happen when Severus and Ivy found out about it made Harry shiver.

"You can, and you will, Harry. I won't let you go until you do."

"I...I made a mistake. A big mistake." Harry forced himself to speak. The lump in his throat didn't make it easier. "I was bad." He slumped down even more. It was out, and now he only had to wait for his punishment.

"You are not bad, Harry. Maybe you *did* something bad, but you are not bad. And now tell me exactly what you did so that we can find a solution for this problem."

"There is no solution. They will throw me out!" Harry tried to move again, but not to free himself this time, but to lean into Alastor's chest and hide his face in it.

Alastor loosened his grip and allowed Harry to lean into him. "Severus and Ivy would never throw you out, Harry, whatever you have done. Maybe they will punish you, but they would never throw you out."

Harry whimpered at the mention of punishment, but he would take anything willingly if they would just forgive him and let him stay. His chances of that were less than zero, in his opinion.

"Punish, not beat, Harry." Alastor thought he would make sure Harry knew this even though he hadn't mentioned this fear. With his background, it was easy to guess what went on in Harry's head. "And now tell me from the beginning what happened!"

In his current position, it was easier for Harry to speak. He didn't have to face Alastor or the empty room. He could hide his face in Alastor's broad chest. The strong arms that encircled him made him feel safe. "I hit Draco."

"Go on," Alastor said calmly when Harry made no attempt to continue his tale.

Harry sighed heavily. "Draco came, and he said cruel things to me. I didn't want to hit him, but I couldn't stop myself. I just wanted him to stop saying all those bad things."

"What bad things, Harry?" Alastor asked, still in his calm voice. Feeling Harry's head rub against his chest while the boy frantically shook his head, Alastor added, "Just tell me, Harry. You will feel better after it."

Harry's words were muffled as he told Alastor everything Draco had said because he pressed his face in Alastor's robes, but Alastor could understand him nevertheless.

"He is just jealous, Harry." Alastor explained calmly, "Severus is his godfather, and now he has to share him with you. That's what made him say all those things. I don't want to excuse his words, but I want you to understand his reasons. You shouldn't let his words hurt you so much. Severus and Ivy love you, and they like to have you



around. None of what Mr. Malfoy said is true. He just wanted to hurt you, and he was obviously successful. I think we should call Severus now and sort this out."

"No!" Harry screamed, and tried to jump off Alastor's lap.

The old Auror still had good reflexes, and so Harry was soon in the position he was in at the beginning of the conversation. "Harry, calm down! You have to speak with Severus. He has surely already found Mr. Malfoy, or the other way around. So he has only heard Mr. Malfoy's version of all this. Do you really want to let it stay like that?"

"Please, I can't speak with him. He will be mad with me," Harry said miserably.

"He will not be happy that you hit Mr. Malfoy, but he won't bite your head off. You cannot run away from your problems. And you should definitely tell Severus your version. I'm sure Mr. Malfoy has left out some important parts."

"I don't know," Harry said desperately. He was glad when Alastor let his head go and loosened his grip on his torso.

Alastor took out his wand and locked the door. This made Harry groan in frustration. "Just a precaution, Harry." Alastor stood up, placed Harry back on the chair and went over to the fireplace.

Harry slumped on the chair. He was scared about what would follow, and he wished the ground would just open up and swallow him. Too quickly for his liking, Alastor came back with Severus in tow. Harry didn't dare to look up. He could hear a chair being moved in front of his chair and Alastor saying, "I'll see you later."

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**Please review! It's depressing to get no feedback!**

## Chapter 29 – Talk about Punishment

*Chapter 29 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and caring family to cope with.

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-II-

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-II-

"Harry, please look at me," Severus instructed Harry calmly.

Harry just shook his head. He was too scared to look up. He couldn't bear looking into Severus' disappointed or angry face. Severus' voice didn't sound as if he was angry, and so it had to be disappointment Harry would have to face. Severus was disappointed about Harry losing control over himself and hitting Draco. Now they would throw him out.

*They probably think I could hurt the twins, even though I would never do anything harmful to them* Harry was desperate and couldn't stop himself from being scared of being left alone again. *Maybe they'll send me to an orphanage, and I won't be able to go to Hogwarts any longer.* All these thoughts and the overwhelming feelings were too much for Harry. He rested his elbows on his legs and hid his face in his hands while he started to sob.

"Harry, please stop crying and tell me what happened." Severus' voice was calm, but stern.

"I can't. I'm sorry." Harry felt his hands becoming wet from his tears, and his nose was running. He hated to be so weak *Draco was right, I'm just a weak freak, a sniffing baby.*

"I already heard Draco's version, Harry, but I would like to hear yours as well."

When Harry felt Severus' hand on his shoulder, he carefully looked up. A handkerchief was pushed into his hand. "I..." Harry had to swallow to get rid of the lump in his throat. He blew his nose and then stuffed the handkerchief into his pocket. Surely Severus didn't want it back. "I'm sorry."

Harry lowered his head again, but before he could hide in his hands, Severus grabbed his chin and gently lifted Harry's head again.

"You already said that, but I would like to know what you are sorry for and what exactly happened."

Harry sighed. "Draco came... and he said bad things... and then... and then I hit him." Harry jerked his head away from Severus' hand. He couldn't bear to look into Severus' face; instead he stared at one of the side walls.

Severus leaned back in his chair. "I would like to hear everything, from the beginning to the end when you landed here. I also want to hear what Draco said to you and why I found this on the floor." Severus held up the applicator.

Harry forced himself to look at Severus to know what he was speaking about. "I used it, and then he knocked it out of my hand."

"He did what?" Anger was flaring from Severus, and Harry got even more scared. Seeing Harry's reaction, Severus tried to control himself and stay calm. "Did you manage to use it completely before he knocked it out of your hand, or shall I call James to check on you before we go on speaking?"

"I already used it." Harry was glad that the anger wasn't directed at him.

"Good. Now tell me what happened." Severus looked sternly at Harry and made him squirm on his seat.

Harry told Severus everything. He tried to leave out some of the things Draco said to him, especially those he was very embarrassed about, like the shopping accident, but Severus watched him closely and didn't stop asking until Harry told him absolutely everything.

"I don't know why, but all I could think about was running away. I knew you would be very angry."

"And what did you think I would do?"

"Throw me out," Harry whispered.

"You were scared I would throw you out, and so you left on your own to spare me the trouble?"

Hearing Severus put it like made Harry's decision seem very stupid now. Harry couldn't say anything; he was just too scared of what would follow now.

Severus sighed. "How often do I have to tell you that we won't throw you out, no matter what happens, Harry? When will that get through that thick head of yours?" Severus asked while patting Harry on the head.

Harry looked up with tearful eyes. "So I can stay?"

"Of course." Severus leaned back in his chair again. "But what you did was wrong, Harry. Draco's words were very hurtful, and he will get punished for it, but that didn't give you the right to hit him."

"I'm sorry."

"I know, but you have to learn from this, Harry, and you will not get out of it unpunished."

Harry was scared. He would take anything that Severus would do to him just to stay in the family, but that didn't make him less scared. *Oh, please, don't let him use the belt,* Harry thought desperately.

Seeing Harry screwing up his face, Severus said, "Tell me what is going on in your head, Harry. What do you think I will do now?"

Another thought came into Harry's mind, and he blurted the question out before thinking about it. "You won't let Draco hit me back, will you?"

"Pardon?" Severus was shocked by this question.

"Uncle Vernon often let Dudley beat me. Dudley often told them that I hit him just to get the opportunity to beat me in front of my aunt and uncle. Please, don't let Draco hit me. He would gloat about it in front of the whole school!" Harry looked pleadingly at Severus.

"I dislike violence, Harry. And I definitely would never let anyone hurt my children."

Harry jumped up.

"No, I would never! I swear I would never hurt the twins. Really, Severus, I swear."

Before Severus could stand up, Harry fell on his knees in front of Severus, muttering, "I swear," the entire time.

Severus grabbed Harry under his armpits and lifted him up on the chair again. He scooted his own chair closer to Harry's so that Harry's knees were between his. Gently, he lifted Harry's chin again. "Harry, I never assumed that you would hurt the twins. I know that you hit Draco because of great stress and because you were very hurt and even scared by his words. You are a good brother to the twins, and you would protect them rather than hurt them."

Harry looked at Severus, stunned. "But you said..."

"I said I would never give permission to somebody to hurt one of my children, Harry. And you are one of my children now, aren't you?"

If Severus wasn't still holding Harry's chin, his jaw would have dropped open. "Oh." After a short pause, Harry asked, "Will you use a belt?"

"I'm not going to beat you, Harry. You did something wrong, and you have to understand that. What would a beating do to help? Nothing."

"But the family rules... one was not to hurt someone else."

"If you go and hit Draco just because you don't like him or if you team up on anyone just because you want to bully him, then yes, it would be likely that you would be over my lap to get some sense into you. Hitting someone out of hurt and angst is another thing, Harry. It's not right, but also nothing you need to get a spanking for. You are smart, Harry. You could have handled it in another way. I hope you will learn so that next time you will react differently."

"But what should I have done?" Harry had no idea.

"For example, you could have got me or you could have called for the Weasley twins, who were still in your room. And never again, Harry, leave the quarters without this." Again, Severus held up the applicator and then thrust it into Harry's hand.

Harry blushed slightly. "Thank you." He pocketed the applicator and looked up into Severus' face again. "So if you won't beat me, what now?"

"First we will speak together with Draco, and then we will find a punishment for both of you."

This time there wasn't a hand on Harry's chin to prevent it from dropping open. Dumbfounded, Harry stared at Severus. "But he hates me! Please don't punish me in front of him."

"You both did something wrong, and I want both of you to understand your mistakes and maybe even the reasons for your wrongdoing. Draco is my godson, Harry, and you have to get along with him. He has lost his father, Harry, and I'm the only father figure he has at the moment. He is scared and hurt that he has to share me with you. That doesn't excuse his behavior towards you, but maybe it will help you to understand him a little."

Harry lowered his head. "He is very mean, Severus."

"I know, and therefore he will be punished. He is hurt and confused, Harry. Something you should understand better than anyone else here. His father was a spy, and all they ever wished for was this war to end, so they could live a normal life. And then it all took a different turn. Now he is alone with his mother and doesn't even know how to cope with this loss. He tries to hide behind hurtful and cold comments, but inside he is hurt and scared. What he said to you is inexcusable. He tried to hurt you as much as he was hurt, and he had no right to do this. It was cruel, and I will speak about this with him before we all meet to discuss what happened. I have to be there for him as well. I won't neglect my duties as his godfather during these hard times for him, but I will make sure that he understands that he isn't allowed to hurt you, mentally or physically. And you have to learn that violence isn't a solution. Is that clear?"

"Yes." Harry looked shyly up to Severus. "Do we really all have to speak together? You can give me more punishment instead."

"Yes, we all have to speak together. Draco is part of our family, and you two have to learn to cope with one another."

Harry sighed. He believed that hell would freeze over before he and Draco would learn to get along with each other. Now that he knew about Draco's problems he felt sorry for him, but the things he said to him were way too hurtful to forgive him.

"Harry?" Severus waited until he had Harry's full attention. "You didn't believe any of what Draco said, did you?" Severus closely observed Harry's reaction to his question.

Harry blushed and bit his bottom lip.

"I will show you the newspapers, Harry. Draco was blowing it out of all proportion. There was, of course, no mention of the incident in the shop in the newspapers. He must have overheard a conversation between Ivy and his mother. They are close friends. I'm sorry that he mocked you about it, and I will make sure that he won't spread it through the school, even though there is nothing to be embarrassed about."

"I freaked out about boxer shorts," Harry said, angry at himself.

"No, you didn't. You were overwhelmed and stressed by the trip. We already spoke about it, Harry. And Draco doesn't know that the last straw was the boxer shorts. Ivy just spoke with Narcissa about your panic attack in general. She wouldn't spread intimate details," Severus assured Harry.

Harry was relieved. He didn't care if Draco had already told the other students. They would learn about his attacks either way. It didn't seem that they would stop soon.

"Will you tell Ivy?"

Severus raised an eyebrow. "Of course, Harry. We don't keep secrets in our family."

Harry sighed again. "Okay."

"So, can we go back home now?" Severus asked as he stood up.

"Yes," Harry said, and followed Severus slowly. He was relieved that they would keep him and that he wouldn't get a beating, but he was scared of seeing Draco again and having to speak with him.

When they entered the quarters, Harry saw Ivy sitting on the couch beside Draco, who was being nursed by Poppy. Alastor sat on the opposite couch and watched them. The moment Ivy looked up and met Harry's eyes, he lowered his head. Severus had to gently guide Harry over to them.

"If you are finished, Poppy, I would like to speak with Draco in private."

Harry didn't look up, and so he couldn't see that Draco's eyes also were locked on the floor and that his face was full of tears. Harry flinched when someone put an arm around his shoulders.

"I was scared, Harry. Please never make me worry about you like this again." It was Ivy, who was now gently stroking his hair.

"I'm sorry." His voice broke, and new tears were running over his cheeks.

"Bring him over here, Ivy, so that I can check him over," Poppy ordered sternly.

While Ivy led Harry to the couch, Alastor stood up. "I will fetch the twins from daycare and distract them for a while."

"Thank you, Alastor. I'm sure they will be happy to see their godfather coming to get them," Ivy said as she gently pushed Harry onto the couch.

Alastor left the room through the fireplace.

The moment Harry sat down, Poppy started to wave her wand over him. "Show me your hand," she ordered after finishing her diagnostic spells.

Harry looked up at her, confused.

"Your hand is hurt, Harry. Please show it to me," Poppy said a little more gently.

Harry looked down at his hands and noticed that his right hand was bigger than the left one. It was hard for him to think at the moment. It was all so confusing.

When Harry didn't react, Ivy carefully took his hand and lifted it in Poppy's direction. Gently, Poppy applied a healing cream on the swollen hand. "It will need a day to heal, but nothing is broken."

"How is Draco?" Harry asked shyly.

"Maybe you should ask him yourself, young man," Poppy said.

"I'm sorry," Harry said to make clear to the women that he regretted what he had done.

"I hope so," Poppy said still looking stern. "Ready to tell us your version?"

Harry sighed. He had wished he wouldn't have to tell all this again, but maybe telling them would make them understand it a little and then Madam Pomfrey wouldn't look so sternly at him. Before he could start, the portrait that led to Albus' office swung sideways, and Minerva and Albus stepped through. Harry immediately lowered his head and sank deeper into the couch.

Minerva sat down on the couch without a word. Albus remained behind the couch and asked, "Where is Severus?"

"Dealing with Draco in the library, Dad. Why don't you sit down? Harry just wanted to start telling us his version," Ivy said.

Albus considered what to do for a moment and then sat down. It was Severus' part to deal with his godson.

Harry brushed his shoes off and drew his legs to his body. Telling the two women was one thing, but telling the whole family was another. He felt watched and very uneasy about it. "I... I..." he started to stutter.

"Just breathe deeply, Harry, and then tell us what happened. We only heard that you and Draco were fighting, and that you left the quarters without your applicator. We were sick with worry," Minerva said, but with the usual strictness in her voice.

And so Harry told what had happened again.

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 30 - Reasons

*Chapter 30 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 30 - Reasons

-II-

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-II-

Harry felt as if he were sinking into the couch. He had curled up in a tight ball while telling his family about what had happened. His face was burning from embarrassment, and he didn't dare to look into their faces.

"Why did you run away, Harry?" Albus asked. "You could have called for Severus. You knew he was in his quarters."

Harry groaned and curled even tighter.

"Harry, stop this. There is no need to hide from us," Ivy said and gently pushed his knees down.

Harry put his hands in his lap and stared down at them. "I feared he would just believe Draco. I mean... I hit Draco, and Severus had told me about the family rules. I thought... I thought you wouldn't want me here any longer." Harry resisted the need to draw his knees up again.

Ivy sighed. "It wasn't right to hit Draco, but we would never abandon you because of this. You are our son, and you will stay our son whatever happens, Harry."

"Severus already told me that after Professor Moody caught me. And he said he won't hit me." Harry fearfully peered at the Headmaster.

"What do you expect, Harry? For me to tell Severus that you need a beating for this?" Albus asked, looking seriously at the dark-haired boy.

Sometimes Harry wondered if Albus could read minds. "You are the headmaster," he said in a small voice.

"No, I'm a grandfather in this situation, and it is for Severus to decide how best to handle this situation. This is a family problem and not a school problem. I don't know what your punishment will be, but I'm sure it will be fitting. I would have thought better of you, Harry, and I hope you learn from it. What Draco said was indeed very hurtful, but it doesn't give you the right to hit him."

Albus seemed to be very angry with Harry, and so Harry couldn't stop himself from curling up again.

"Really, Dad," Ivy scolded, and laid a comforting hand on Harry's shoulder. "We are just worried, Harry, and a little disappointed. But I'm sure you won't make the same mistake again."

"No, I'm sorry," Harry said desperately. "I'm really sorry." His voice broke, and he started to cry again. At that moment he wished they would just beat him and not look so disappointed.

"Harry, please calm down." Ivy tried her best to calm him, but Harry's sobs became even louder.

"Let me try it," Albus said as he came over and took Ivy's place. He gently pushed Harry's knees down again and lifted his chin. "Come on, look at me, Harry."

"I'm"sob"sorry!"sob"really!" Harry looked at Albus with tearful eyes.

Albus tried to look more gentle. "I know, Harry, but I cannot just hug you and say everything will be okay. Hurting someone never is the right thing to do. No matter what the reason. What Draco did was equally bad, but he isn't my family. You have to learn to think before you do something. Not only the fight with Draco but also running away without your applicator. You should know by now that you don't have to run away from us. We were very worried. What if Alastor hadn't found you? You know what it feels like to have a panic attack. What would happen if you were without your applicator and without anybody around you who knows how to help you?"

"I didn't think about it. I was just scared," Harry explained while he tried to wipe away his tears with his sleeve.

"Use this, Harry." Poppy placed a handkerchief in his hand.

"I still have Severus'," Harry said and started to rummage in his pocket for it.

"Never mind, you can have two," Poppy said, petting Harry's shoulder.

Harry gave up looking for Severus' handkerchief. "Thank you."

"Our worry and disappointment should show you how much you mean to us. If we didn't care for you, we wouldn't be worried or disappointed. Severus has already told you that Draco wasn't telling the truth. So there is nothing to worry about. Your panic attacks are nothing to be embarrassed about. They are part of you at the moment, and you have to accept that. That doesn't mean you are weak or crazy or anything like that."

Harry nodded sadly. "I know. And I won't forget my applicator in future."

"It was good that you used it in time, Harry. I'm very proud of you. If there is ever a next time for something like this, I want you to pick up your applicator before you do anything else," Poppy instructed calmly.

Harry remembered for the first time that he'd still had company when all this happened. "Where are Fred and George?"

"They found Draco and called for Severus. Now they are back in Gryffindor Tower. They were very worried and wanted to look for you, but by then we had already got the firecall from Alastor," Ivy explained.

"If Draco ever tells you something like this again or hurts you, you have to tell us, Harry. We would have helped you to solve the problem, and we could have told you what was true and what wasn't. I think if you didn't let his words so close to your heart, then you wouldn't have felt so bad. Am I right, Harry? Did you think you are a burden to us or that we would be ashamed because of you?" Minerva asked.

Harry had the feeling Minerva's eyes were drilling through him. His face flushed, and he tried to draw up his legs again. Albus quickly prevented it by laying his hand on Harry's leg.

"Sometimes," Harry whispered.

Ivy came over and knelt in front of him. "Harry," she said softly and stroked his hair. "You are one of the best things that has happened to us. We love you, and we will never stop loving you. Severus almost went crazy when we didn't know where you had gone, and that you didn't have your applicator. You are no burden for us, Harry; you are a gift." She kissed his forehead.

"I can't understand why. Why do you want me?" Harry asked while looking directly in Ivy's green eyes.

"Because we love you, and we want to show you what it means to have a family," Ivy explained in her motherly way.

"Harry, would you please join us?" Severus asked as he stood in the doorframe of the library.

Harry flinched. The warm cosy feeling that had spread through his body at Ivy's words vanished, and the fear came up again. "Yes, sir," he croaked.

Slowly he stood up and went over to Severus. When he passed Severus, he didn't dare to look up at him. He flinched when Severus placed a hand on his shoulder and slowly guided him to a chair opposite Draco. Severus sat down sideways to both of them.

Harry carefully looked up and saw that Draco was looking at the floor. His hands were shaking, and now that Harry looked closer, he saw that Draco's whole body was shaking; he was crying.

"So, Draco?" Severus said sternly.

"I'm sorry," the Slytherin said miserably.

"Draco," Severus said warningly.

The blond boy sniffed and drew his sleeve over his face. "I'm sorry for saying all those things to you and... and that I hit the potion thing out of your hand."

Harry didn't know what to say. That wasn't the Draco he knew. All the arrogance and attitude were gone, and he was just a picture of misery.

"Do you accept Draco's apology?" Severus asked Harry.

Harry shook his head to stop gaping at Draco. "Yes, and eh... I also would like to apologize. I shouldn't have hit you. "

"Do you accept Harry's apology, Draco?" Severus asked.

"Yes," Draco said in small voice.

Harry felt a little bit as if they were in a duel and Severus was the referee. He didn't have much time to think about it because Severus spoke again. "Maybe it would help to explain to the other why you reacted as you did. Would you start, Harry?"

Harry groaned and lowered his head.

"Draco?" Severus asked.

Draco sighed. "Okay, I will start."

Harry looked up and saw that Draco still was looking at his hands.

Draco's voice was unsteady when he started to speak. "Severus told you about my father. I hadn't seen Severus for a week, and I wanted to speak with him. He is my godfather, and before you were part of his family, he always had time for me. I was already mad at you, and I feared that now he wouldn't have time for me because he has to watch over you. And then you didn't let me in and asked me in this dismissive tone what I wanted. I have all rights to be here, Potter. He is my godfather."

Draco looked up at Harry, and Harry could see for the first time how tear-stained Draco's face was.

"I also have all the right to be here. We never spoke civilly before, so what did you expect?" Harry interrupted him.

"That you would let me in to speak with Severus without interfering," Draco said angrily. "He is my godfather."

"And he is my father," Harry said heatedly. He blushed when he realized what he just had said. "Adoptive father, I mean." His face was burning.

"Whatever. I just wanted to speak with him, and you behaved as if I had to ask you for permission."

"I didn't," Harry said.

"You did," Draco countered.

"That's enough. You will both stay calm and won't shout at each other. Go on, Draco," Severus said strictly, and both boys flinched.

"Eh... I wanted to show you that I have the right to be here, and that I don't have to ask you for permission. I just wanted to hurt you as much as I was hurt, and so I said those things to you and hit this potion thing out of your hand. I didn't know how important it was for you. I didn't really want to endanger you, just hurt you." Draco looked shyly at Harry.

Harry was stunned by Draco's look; it couldn't be that he really regretted what they'd done. "But you wanted to hurt me. You said all those horrible things and... and you lied."

"Yes, I said those things. I don't deny it. And I still don't like that you live here and that you steal Severus from me," Draco said bitterly.

"Draco, we already spoke about this. If you feel I don't spend enough time with you, then you have to be angry with me and not with Harry," Severus said calmly.

"I don't want to take him away from you. I didn't even know that he is your godfather," Harry said.

Draco looked up, surprised. "You didn't? Everyone knows."

"I didn't. We don't spend much time together, do we? So how should I know?"

"Then I'm sorry for saying anything to you." Draco lowered his head. "I didn't know that you hadn't asked for them to take you in, and that you are still having problems adjusting. I thought you just moved in to take them away from me."

"You thought what?" Harry was stunned. How stupid can a Slytherin be? Moving in to steal his godfather! As if Harry didn't have enough other problems.

"Yeah, I didn't know the real reason. Nobody told me. Okay, I knew about what the *Prophet* said, but I just thought you had overdone it while speaking with them. I didn't know that you haven't even spoken with them. I'm sorry for saying those things to you, and I'm sorry for what happened to you."

That was way too much for Harry. He stared open-mouthed at the blond Slytherin.

"Fine, I think now it is your turn to explain your actions, Harry," said Severus, breaking the silence.

"What should I say?" Harry asked, confused.

"Why you hit Draco and ran away. Why you didn't just speak back to him or left him to go into your room."

Harry sighed. Draco was looking curiously at him. "Ehm... I was hurt, and you said things that I've wondered about for some time. Hearing them from you made me think my worries were justified. I think I wanted to hurt you as much as you did with your words, but I couldn't do it with just words. I didn't think twice and only realized that I hit you when you were lying on the floor bleeding. I was shocked because I didn't want to do that, and so I ran away."

"I was a little shocked as well, Potter. You landed quite a punch in my face," Draco said, grinning.

"Yes, I guess I did," Harry said and couldn't suppress a grin as well.

"Too bad that I'm not as amused as you two," Severus said dangerously and leaned forward. "I think it is time to speak about punishment."

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**Please review!**

## Chapter 31 - Punishment

*Chapter 31 of 32*

Harry is getting abused by his relatives. When Snape and his wife find out about it, they adopt him. So now he has two little twin brothers and a caring family to cope with.

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### Chapter 31 - Punishment

Both boys shrunk into their chairs.

"First, your separate punishments. Harry, you are grounded for the next week. That means you will be returning to the quarters as soon as classes are over. No visits from your friends until next Friday."

Harry was shocked but didn't dare to say anything. At least he could see his friends in classes.

"Draco, as I already told you, you will clean the Slytherin's bathroom for the next week, and you will write your mother a letter about what happened."

Draco blushed and nodded.

"Now to your shared punishment. You will both help Hagrid to de-gnome the garden on Sunday morning. If you don't work together and do your work well, that will be repeated until you two learn to work together. Is that clear?"

Both boys nodded eagerly. All their hopes that this conversation was over now were destroyed when Severus spoke again. "In addition, you two will write an essay about what you have done wrong, what you could have done instead, and how you can avoid situations like this in future. And I don't want to read 'We will try to get out of the way of the other.' Is that clear, too?"

Again, both boys nodded.

"You will write your essays together here in the library on Sunday afternoon. I want to see at least five feet from each of you. You will start at one o'clock and will work on it until at least five o'clock. If you need more time, you will just stay longer. I don't want to hear about any complaints to your mothers or whomever. If I hear of something like that, you can be sure I will find another punishment for you in addition to the others. Clear?"

"Yes, sir," both boys answered quickly.

"Good!" Severus leaned back in his chair. He was satisfied with how this conversation had turned out. "Draco, you can go. Write the letter to your mother today. I will wait to contact her until tomorrow."

"Yes, sir," Draco said as he stood up. He looked uncertainly at Harry and then went over to Severus and hugged him.

Harry couldn't stop himself from feeling jealous. He knew it was stupid, but he also wished he could hug Severus now. It would make the conversation and punishment stuff less embarrassing, and he would feel much better because if Severus hugged him back, he knew he would be forgiven.

Draco left the room, and Harry started to feel even more unsure. He looked down at his hands again. What else should he do? He couldn't just go over and hug Severus. He squeaked when his chair was suddenly pulled closer to Severus and turned so that Harry had to face his adoptive father. "So, what's going on in that head now?" Severus asked in a kind tone and ruffled Harry's hair.

Hearing that Severus' voice wasn't strict anymore, Harry looked up. "Are you still angry with me?"

"I'm proud of both of you that you have spoken so openly. No, I'm not angry with you. I hope you have learned something from this, and I also expect you to serve your punishment properly."

"I will," Harry said, nodding frantically.

"Then you are forgiven, Harry," Severus said in his friendly voice again.

Harry bit his bottom lip and considered what to do. Finally, he took all his courage and threw himself at Severus and hugged him.

Severus wasn't surprised. He had seen Harry's expression when Draco had hugged him, and he had hoped that Harry would find the courage to do what he wanted to. Severus shifted Harry onto his lap, and Harry leaned against his chest, sighing.

"Severus?" Harry asked cautiously.

"Yes, Harry?"

"What about tomorrow? Albus, Minerva and the twins wanted to go to Hogsmeade with me. Am I still allowed? I mean because of the grounding."

"Normally, I would say no, but the twins are already so very excited about it, and Albus and Minerva also wanted to spend some time with you. So if they still want to take you with them, you can go."

"What about Ivy?"

"What about her?" Severus asked, confused.

"Will she also give me a punishment?"

Severus chuckled. "No, of course all that I told you was arranged with her in advance. We always decide together about everything that concerns our children. She just didn't take part in this conversation because of Draco. She feared it would be too awkward for him."

"Oh," Harry said and snuggled closer.

"And Albus and Minerva?"

"Are grandparents in this case and will not interfere in our decision about punishment. But of course, they could decide that they don't want to go to Hogsmeade after this."

Harry groaned miserably.

Severus chuckled again. "You just have to ask them."

Finally realizing that he was still sitting on Severus' lap, Harry blushed and stood up.

"Please, sit down again. I would still like to speak with you about something else." Severus gestured to Harry's chair.

When Harry sat down again, Severus said, "On Monday, you will only attend the first four classes. Then you will meet James in the hospital wing for a check-up, and we will go to the Ministry to sign the adoption papers... or have you changed your mind?"

"No, I would still like the adoption," Harry said eagerly.

"We also have to name your godparents then, Harry. Alastor and Poppy are the godparents of Lysander and Eathan and would like to be yours as well. So is that okay with you?"

"Sure." He had always wondered how it would be to have a godfather or godmother. Now he would have both. Sirius had been killed before he could even get to know him, after all.

"Then that is settled," Severus said and smiled. "So, ready to face the rest of the family again?"

Harry sighed. "Okay."

When they entered the living room, it was even more crowded than before. The twins were looking at Harry with scared expressions. "Are we not going to Hogsmeade tomorrow?"

Harry quickly gazed at Albus and Minerva and then looked down at the sad faces of the twins. "I don't know. I did something very stupid, and maybe your grandparents don't want to take me with you this time."

"Why don't you three go playing for a while so that we adults can decide what we will do?" Albus asked.

"Okay," Harry said sadly and guided the twins in the direction of their room. Before they reached the stairs, he turned and said, "I just want to say again that I'm sorry. Really! Whatever you decide, it will be okay with me." With that he turned and left his new parents, grandparents and godparents to what they wanted to speak about.

## Chapter 32 - Albus vs. Severus

*Chapter 32 of 32*

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### Chapter 32 - Albus vs. Severus

"I think we shouldn't go, or at least we shouldn't take Harry with us," Albus said, still angry.

"Do you say this as a grandfather, or the Headmaster?" Severus asked sarcastically.

"Whichever you want, Severus. It would reward his behavior if we still go to Hogsmeade," Albus replied sternly.

"He has already been punished by us, Albus, and I think quite enough. You would punish the twins as well with this decision. And going with just the twins would be cruel to Harry," Severus said, beginning to become more agitated.

"Yes, maybe, but he is grounded, Severus. Going to Hogsmeade during his grounding would be inappropriate."

It was like a battle between the two men. The women sat silently around them, and Alastor was regarding the scene with concern.

"Inappropriate? It would be a double punishment, Albus. And I'm quite sure you are mixing your duties as a grandfather with your duties as a Headmaster here. Do I have to remind you how often you have patted the heads of the twins after we punished them? Or how often you gave them sweets when they weren't allowed dessert?" Severus asked.

"You can hardly compare the twins speaking back to you or Eathan's sulking with Harry hitting Draco!" Albus said strictly, his voice becoming louder.

Severus slammed his hand on the table and stood up to hover over Albus. "He has been punished for it, Albus! How often do I have to repeat it? Do you think I was too lax? Do you want to criticize our punishment?" Severus was furious. His eyes were sparking with anger.

Albus rose from his seat, the two men face to face. "Don't yell at me like that. I am not criticizing your punishment, but it is up to me to decide about the Hogsmeade weekend. You cannot tell me what I have to do."

"That's enough," Alastor said forcefully and stepped between the angry men.

"Yes, absolutely," Poppy said and came over to Severus, who was breathing hard. Something was odd. She eyed Severus closely, and when he started to get nervous, she knew that there was something off.

"I'm sorry! Please stop yelling. You are scaring the twins," a small, fearful voice called from the hall.

All eyes were on Harry now. He blushed and wished that all the adults would not stare in his direction. So he felt relieved when they all turned to look at Severus, who was clutching his chest during a bad coughing fit. But the relief quickly changed into concern when Severus didn't stop.

"What have you done this time, Severus?" Poppy asked in her no-nonsense tone. She gently pushed him back in his chair and started to wave her wand over him.

"Really, Severus, you will never learn." With a flick of her wand the Glamour was canceled and a gaunt looking Severus was sitting in front of her. He was sweating, and his cheeks were flushed.

Albus let himself sink down on his chair. *Why didn't I notice it? I was shouting at him while he is still ill!* Severus-

"No, that's enough talking for you men today," Poppy interrupted Albus sternly. "I think it's time to listen to the women now. Ivy, Minerva, I think you will find a solution for this problem. Alastor, you will look after the boys and you, young man, will follow me into your bedroom without protesting." She looked sternly at Severus, her hand resting on his chest to help him breathe with a little healing magic.

Severus followed her order without looking at anyone in the room. His chest was burning. Today was too much stress. Forgetting his potions and being up the whole afternoon without rest had worsened his condition.

Albus still sat in his chair and was staring after Severus, shocked. He blamed himself for Severus' condition. He should have known that Severus was unwell after going without rest because of the whole affair, and he should have realized that Severus was wearing a Glamour. But all his anger and his worry about Harry's reaction to Draco had distracted him too much. The short squeeze of Alastor's hand on his shoulder gave him only a little comfort.



"Come on, Harry, let's go to the twins," Alastor said and guided a shocked Harry in the direction of the twin's room.

"Really, Dad, why can't you two discuss things calmly?" Ivy said sadly and shook her head.

"I think Harry really was punished enough, Albus. That's the only weekend we could both keep free to make this Hogsmeade trip. If we don't go tomorrow, then we won't be able to for some time." Minerva tried to convince her husband.

"I know, but I just feel uneasy about it," Albus said thoughtfully.

"Why don't you give him a choice, Dad? If you go to Hogsmeade tomorrow then he has to extend his punishment to next Sunday and not only Friday. That would compensate for the one day in Hogsmeade and would be an additional day for you to not feel guilty about him having fun during his grounding. You can let him choose if he is willing to have a longer grounding for going to Hogsmeade with you two and the twins." Ivy used her puppy look at her father, and it worked, as always.

"That sounds good. What do you think, Minerva?" Albus asked his wife.

"I would have taken him with us even without the punishment extension," Minerva said truthfully.

"Fine, let me be the guilty one," Albus said and stood up. "I will go and speak with him, then."

"Albus!" He stopped when he heard his wife calling him. The tone of her voice was something to be concerned about. He turned to her, and her face was another indication that she was angry with him. Her lips were thin, and her eyebrows were drawn together. "If you are going to be like this tomorrow, then you can stay at home. I won't let you spoil the trip for the boys."

"I'm angry at myself at the moment, Minerva. I can live quite well with Ivy's suggestion. Do you want to accompany me while I tell him?" He looked kindly at Minerva, and she relaxed a little.

"Yes, I think so. What about you, Ivy?" Minerva asked.

"I will look for Severus. Maybe Poppy needs help."

Minerva snorted. "I don't think so, but if you feel better by doing it..."

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#### *Meanwhile in the room of the twins*

"Calm down, Harry. They will sort it out," Alastor said as he gently pushed Harry onto Eathan's bed.

The twins were sitting tear-stained on the same bed. Alastor pulled a chair near the bed and sat down. "What's up, boys? You already know the tempers of your father and grandfather. There is nothing to worry about." He gently stroked their hair, and suddenly his lap was full of two crying boys. Alastor's heart broke for the lonely boy on the bed, who looked so lost. "I would offer you my lap, too, but I fear there isn't enough room." This worked, and Harry grinned.

"No problem, sir," Harry said, already feeling a little better. If that was the normal way of discussion between Albus and Severus, he didn't have to feel so bad about it.

"No need for the formality, Harry. I'm Alastor."

"Okay," Harry said uncertainly. He had been surprised how quickly he had started to become comfortable using Ivy's and Severus' first names. Using Minerva's and Albus' first names still made him feel a little uneasy. With Alastor it would be the same, Harry believed.

"Will grandpa be nice to Daddy again?" Lysander asked worriedly.

"Of course he will. You know him well enough, boys."

"Will you and Aunt Poppy go to Hogsmeade with Harry, Lysander and me tomorrow?" Eathan asked his godfather.

"I think your grandparents will find a solution, boys. And even if they decide against the trip, you should accept it. There will be another opportunity one day."

"But we wanted to show Harry the toy shop. We have saved all our money to buy him a plushy," Eathan explained while his brother was busy sucking his thumb, almost drifting into sleep.

Alastor grinned while looking at a blushing Harry. In that moment the door opened and Albus and Minerva came in.

X-X

#### *Meanwhile in Ivy and Severus's bedroom*

"Severus, you are really unbelievable," Poppy scolded the Potions Professor. "I thought we agreed that you would stop using a Glamour."

"What should I do? I had to deal with Harry and Draco. Nobody else could have done it. Should I have let them see me like this? They are kids. Just thirteen years old," Severus explained exhaustedly. He was glad to be in bed now and getting the right potions to soothe the pain in his chest and make breathing easier.

"Why not?" Poppy asked him. After getting a raised eyebrow from Severus, she continued, "Really, Severus, you don't have to hide your condition from the boys or anyone. The times of Voldemort are over. He was the only one you had to wear your mask in front of. Your kids and your godson would not think you are weak. Right now you are a bad role model for them. You scolded Harry for using a Glamour, but you yourself are using it. What do you expect to teach him by that?"

"Poppy...." Severus said, sighing.

"Don't 'Poppy' me, Severus. Think about it. You have worsened your condition again. You could have been up tomorrow without any problems, but now..."

"No, Poppy. You won't ban me from teaching any longer. Albus has already ruined my whole schedule in Potions this week." Severus tried to sit up but was gently pushed back into the cushions by Poppy.

"I won't decide now if you will teach next week. When it comes to you, I never could say early on if you would be able to teach on Monday. James and I will decide on Sunday. Tomorrow you will rest as much as possible. With the boys out of the house, you should have nothing to distract you. I will tell Ivy to keep a close eye on you."

"You can be sure of it," Ivy said while entering the room. She came over to the bed and sat down opposite Poppy. Her eyes rested worriedly on her husband. Her hand touched his face and stroked a loose wisp of hair out of his face.

Severus groaned and moved his head away from her hand. "Please, Ivy, I'm not one of the boys. I hate it when you do this."

"Then don't behave like one of them, Severus," Poppy said sternly. She looked over to Ivy and explained, "He is okay. Tomorrow he should stay in bed as long as possible. He doesn't have to sleep, but at least he has to rest. Please see that he obeys my orders this time. I will inform James, and I'm sure he will come to see Severus as well."

Severus groaned again. "You act as if I'm dying. It's just a stupid bronchitis. Why do I need two Healers to fuss over me?"

"Because one isn't enough to talk sense into you. Now drink this," Poppy ordered.

Severus eyed the vial skeptically. "I don't need a sleeping draught."

"Who is the Healer?" Poppy asked, annoyed.

When Severus looked sternly at Poppy, Ivy said, "Please, Severus."

Severus rolled his eyes. "Why do you always have to team up against me?" But seeing the worried face of his wife, he grabbed for the vial. "You always scare her with your fussing over me, Poppy. I'm just a little tired."

Poppy just snorted. "Tell it to James tomorrow. I'm sure he will be all ears."

Severus glared at Poppy.

"Your potion, Severus," Poppy said warningly.

Severus hadn't even drained the whole vial when Poppy had to grab quickly for the vial so it wouldn't fall. Severus was sound asleep.

"Just tired." She shook her head. Seeing Ivy's worried face, she laid one of her hands over Ivy's. "He will be okay, Ivy. You know him."

Ivy sighed. "I wish he would take better care of himself. It hurts me when he always worries about others but not about himself. He could have been much better if he had just listened to you and James. I can't watch him all the time, and I'm not able to see when he wears a Glamour."

"I'm sure James will speak with him about it tomorrow. He always listens more to him than me. He is quite macho."

Ivy took Poppy's hand. "He really respects you, Poppy. Please never believe anything else."

"I know, Ivy, I know. I just hope James will find a way to make him cooperate more. I would hate to set him on bed rest again on Monday."

X-X

#### *Back in the room of the twins*

"Grandma," Eathan shouted and ran over to Minerva.

She lifted him in her arms, and he hugged her tightly. Soon two more chairs were conjured and they all sat down. Lysander was almost asleep in Alastor's arms. Harry sat quietly on the bed, and Eathan was cradled in Minerva's lap.

Albus sighed and looked at Harry. "I'm sorry that you had to hear Severus and me shouting, Harry. Sometimes we forget that there are others around us."

"It's okay. The twins were crying, and I didn't know what I could do." Harry lowered his head. "I felt guilty that they were crying because you and Severus were arguing because of me."

"You don't have to feel guilty, Harry. Severus and I should have handled this situation more calmly. I'm sorry for worrying you and the twins."

"It's okay."

"No, it's not, Harry. I'm really sorry." He paused for a moment and then went on. "I had a problem with going to Hogsmeade while you are grounded. You already know that I was disappointed with you about your trouble with Draco. I think your punishment is well deserved, and so I wouldn't feel right breaking it to have our Hogsmeade weekend."

"I understand. But please, at least go with the twins. They were looking forward to it so much," Harry said sadly.

"But we want to go with Harry. Right, Ly?" Eathan asked his brother.

"I fear you won't get an answer from him, Eathan," Alastor said as he stood up. He gently carried the sleeping child over to his bed, changed his clothes into pajamas and tucked him in.

"We could still all go, Harry. But there is one condition." Albus eyed Harry closely.

Hope rose up in Harry, and he looked eagerly at Albus. "What condition?"

"You have to accept an extension of your grounding until next Sunday."

"Yes, I will accept," Harry answered quickly.

"Yeah," Eathan said, jumping out of Minerva's lap and over to Harry.

"Then that's settled," Albus said and stood up. "You, young man, will go and brush your teeth and wash your face and then off to bed," Albus said to Eathan.

"But Ly got to sleep without brushing his teeth and washing his face," Eathan said and started to sulk.

"No sulking, Eathan. You want to be fresh and well rested for our trip tomorrow," Minerva said and took Eathan's hand.

"I will be well rested without washing," Eathan tried again.

Minerva just laughed. "I'm sure you think so, but that doesn't change that we both will visit the bathroom now to clean you up."

"Okay, Grandma," Eathan said and followed Minerva. Suddenly he stopped and looked up at his grandma. "And Harry? He also has to wash."

"Harry hasn't even eaten, yet. He will have to eat supper, first." Minerva glanced at Albus.

"I will make sure he eats something," Albus promised.

When Minerva, Alastor and Eathan had left the room, Albus turned to Harry again.

"Are you still mad at me?" Harry asked worriedly.

"Harry, I already told you that I was disappointed in you, but your punishment will be enough to make you understand that what you did was wrong. I'm no longer mad at you, and we will spend a nice day together tomorrow. Don't worry. And now you have to eat or the women of these quarters will hunt me down for starving you."

Harry grinned and followed Albus to the living room.