

Could Have Been Mine

by Lady Lanera

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Almost His

Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Notes: I've placed an astrisk before and after each paragraph that contains direct quotations from *Sorcerer's Stone* and *Chamber of Secrets* concerning the Sorting Hat scenes in both.

I wanted to scream. I wanted to yell until I couldn't even manage to whisper anymore. I wanted to kick, punch, and explode every single potion bottle in my current vicinity. I was that frustrated. Of course, it just had to be another night of 'Remedial Potions' class with Potter, the sole purpose I started to drink again. What was possibly frustrating about that?

Why is that bloody boy not blocking me? It is not as if I enjoy watching his horrid memories of childhood! thought, sneering. More memories of a dark, enclosed area flashed in my mind. *Honestly, Potter, would it kill you to think of something else? Perhaps a memory of a birthday party or something!* mused. I then sighed in my head. *At this point, I'll take anything else, Potter.*

Within seconds after thinking it, the scenery in Potter's mind quickly changed. It surprisingly threw me off-guard for a few seconds. However, I did feel a slight more urgency in the boy's mental attacks against my mind. Potter wasn't fast enough or wasn't even able to throw me out of his mind, though. I smirked as I heard the boy's immediate groan as he recognized his memory. The scenery then cleared and I understood. Even I wanted to groan then.

The Sorting Ceremony, I thought. Why in Merlin's name is the boy showing me this? I was there. I saw precisely what occurred. He need not remind me of this dreadful occurrence. I already know how like his father he is. However, when I tried to push the memory to the side, I found that I was unable to do so. Something was preventing me, which judging by Potter's reaction couldn't be the young Gryffindor. I then allowed it to play out since I had no choice in the matter.

The young first-year version of the messy-haired boy slowly climbed up on the stool. A few seconds later, Deputy Headmistress Minerva McGonagall, a strict-looking witch in a pointy hat and emerald robes, placed a decrepit-looking hat upon the small boy's head. Almost at once, the hat came to life and started to speak.

"Hmm . . . difficult, very difficult," the Sorting Hat said thoughtfully. *"Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either. There's talent, oh yes, and a thirst to prove yourself. But where to put you?"* it asked.*

Honestly, Potter, if you are feeling that sentimental, then...

"Not Slytherin, not Slytherin," the young eleven-year-old boy pleaded in the memory.*

Oh, yes, because that was so very bloody likely to occur, Potter. Honestly, some days you really are the dunderhead I make you out to be. As if Dumbledore would ever allow that foolish hat to place you into Slytherin, I thought with a growl.

"Not Slytherin, eh?" the Sorting Hat drawled. "Are you sure? You could be great, you know."*

A great pain in my ass, you mean, I thought.

"It's all here in your head," the Sorting Hat continued.*

As if a dilapidated talking hat could ever find anything in that gigantic head. Just like his precious father, there is too much ego strutting around in there, I thought with a sneer.

"And Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness. There's no doubt about that. No . . . ?"*

On his way to greatness, you barmy old hat, you clearly are as insane as your owner is. The boy is destined to fight an insane dark wizard. How is that great? It only means he is unlucky.

"Please, please," the eleven-year-old boy with bright green eyes pleaded in the memory. "Anything but Slytherin," he whispered, begging, "anything but Slytherin."*

"Well, if you're sure, better be . . . GRYFFINDOR!" the Sorting Hat loudly announced.*

It didn't take long before the scenery shifted again. This time I was in Dumbledore's office. Judging by how Potter looked in this memory, I guessed Potter was twelve now. Again, something prevented me from going onto the next memory. Once more, the Sorting Hat made an appearance.

"Bee in your bonnet, Potter?" it said from the shelf it sat on.*

"I-I was," the twelve-year-old Potter stuttered.*

Oh, honestly, Potter, can we be any more of a drama queen? It is a hat for Merlin's sake. It is not as if the stupid thing is going to bite you, I growled in my mind.

"I was just wondering if you put me in the right house," the second-year Gryffindor quietly asked. Potter was being uncharacteristically hesitant.*

My ears perked up as did my curiosity at the boy's question. I had to admit it was a rather gripping tale. Then again, much of Potter's hidden life was.

"Yes, you were particularly difficult to place. But I stand by what I said last year."*

I sighed and rolled my eyes. Of course, he truly is Gryffindor's Golden Boy through and through. As if I expected it any differently. The boy is his...

"You would have done well in Slytherin," the Sorting Hat interrupted my thoughts.*

My head whipped over to the scene again. I felt my blood stop flowing temporarily. I had to have heard that wrong. However, when I heard the second-year Gryffindor's response, I knew I hadn't. It was rare after all for me to hear anything wrong.

"You're wrong," Harry Potter, the second-year Gryffindor, stubbornly replied.*

Seconds later, a strong magical force threw me out of Potter's mind and memories. It took me a few moments before my emotions and breathing were under control. All the while, though, my dark eyes remained focused entirely on the fifth-year Gryffindor that leaned his back against the wall.

"You could've been mine," I stated as I sat down at my desk.

"Huh," the insolent boy said, dumbstruck.

"You should have been mine," I stated, feeling a strange tranquility pass over me. I remained staring at Potter for a few more minutes before realizing how foolish we both looked. "Why did you not wish to be in Slytherin?" I asked calmly.

"I . . . uh . . . well . . ." Potter started to say.

"Spit it out, Potter. I do not have the time or patience for your foolishness tonight."

"Someone told me about its reputation," Potter quickly replied before glancing down at the floor.

"Hagrid," I hissed. I should have known. Of course, that idiot let that quaint thought slip to Potter. "Yes, well, contrary to popular belief, Potter, not all Slytherins are evil or wish to commit genocide."

"You'll have to forgive me if I don't take your word on that," Potter replied cheekily. "Because, quite honestly, Snape, I haven't met a single Slytherin yet who hasn't either tried to maim or kill me."

"I wonder which category you have placed Professor Sinistra into, Potter," I responded before raising an eyebrow towards him. I immediately smirked when I noticed the young man's surprise. It was a little known fact that Aurora Sinistra, the current Astronomy professor here, was a Slytherin. For some reason, she did not voice her sorting to others, but I knew it since she was only a year behind me in school. "You have at most met only a hundred Slytherins, Potter. It is foolish of you to believe for a single second that you know all of us. While I will give you the benefit that we do have a tendency for evil to seduce us, it also applies to every other house in Hogwarts. Need I remind you about Pettigrew?" I knew it was a low blow, but the boy needed to understand my point.

"Fine, Snape, you win," Potter said in a low voice.

I immediately rolled my eyes at the foolish boy. However, I bit my tongue from saying anything else that would hurt the boy. After all, that kicked puppy dog look on his face wasn't enjoyable to me. That look had made me get into trouble with the headmaster more than a few times.

"If it makes you feel any better, Potter, I am grateful you're in Gryffindor." That got a reaction. "What I mean to say is that if you were in my house, you would've been expelled long ago. At least this time we know that the Dark Lord has returned and are able to protect you properly as a result."

"Cedric wouldn't have died, though," Potter whispered.

"You do not know that," I responded quietly. "Who's to say that the Dark Lord wouldn't have decided to attack Hogwarts until he had you? You cannot waste your time thinking of what ifs, Potter. You must live in the here and now in order to survive." I then said the corniest thing I probably ever said in my entire life. "Constant vigilance, remember?" Potter immediately smiled quirkily at me.

"Thank you, Professor," Potter replied. We then remain in comfortable silence. For the first time in a very long time, we were not arguing. It was as if the war ended and we had survived as two comrades in arms in the fight for our lives. It felt as if we had won. The young man then turned to leave.

"Slytherin or not, I know you'll be great, Harry," I said when he reached the door. He glanced back at me and nodded slowly in acceptance. The door then closed behind

him. "Could have been mine," I whispered in the cool crisp air.