

Sanctuary

by peskipiksi

Teenage Sirius finds himself in a precarious position.

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Ten Outstanding OWLs you would have thought they'd be pleased, Sirius reflected. But nothing he did pleased his parents any more. Regulus could get one "A" next year and they'd love him for it, just because he's a Slytherin, Sirius thought sourly. His mum and dad just said *he* had brought dishonour on the family by succeeding in Gryffindor, and the conversation had degenerated into the usual barrage of insults "filthy little blood traitor" had featured heavily.

'My poor grandfather would turn in his grave if he knew what you'd become,' his mother had screamed at him.

'Half our family wouldn't be in their graves if they hadn't got mixed up with Grindlewald's supporters or the Death Eaters. You might want to think about that, Regs,' Sirius shot at his brother, 'or you'll go the same way as them.'

'No fear.' Regulus said, a sneer twisting features which promised to become every bit as handsome as his older brother's. 'I won't be stupid enough to let slip I've got a blood traitor for a brother.'

'Don't you dare call your family stupid!' Mrs Black screeched. 'Don't you dare blame your pure-blood relatives for your brother's treachery!'

Under cover of his mother's furious tirade at Regulus, Sirius slipped upstairs to his room. Once there, he started hurling stuff haphazardly into his school trunk. He wasn't staying here a moment longer. He had put up with his parents' pureblood mania for years and he wasn't going to take it any more. As he struggled to fit everything in, Sirius regretted not paying attention to Professor Flitwick when he had taught the class domestic spells last year. The boys, Sirius and James especially, had sniggered as Flitwick explained that packing charms could be very useful. 'You never know, in the current climate, when you may have to leave a place unexpectedly,' he had claimed. Sirius wished now that he had listened.

When he had finally managed to squash everything into his trunk, Sirius looked around the now bare room with a twinge of regret. The only things left, apart from the furniture, were the decorations on the walls his Gryffindor banners, motorbike photos, and the posters of Muggle swimwear models. His eyes lingered on the largest one, a promotional poster for a Muggle film featuring Ursula Andress rising out of the sea in a vestigial white bikini, and for a moment Sirius considered attempting to remove it from the wall. But Permanent Sticking Charms did exactly what they said, and anyway, better to leave Ursula here as a thorn in his mother's side.

The respite from his mother's abuse didn't last long. As soon as Sirius came downstairs, dragging his heavy trunk behind him, she started on him again.

'Where do you think you're going?'

'I've had enough,' Sirius said. 'I'm leaving.'

'You ungrateful little brat!' shrieked Mrs Black. 'If you walk out of that door, don't you ever expect to come back!' and, turning her back on him, she stalked away.

'Fine by me,' Sirius muttered. As he shut the front door behind him, he heard a minor explosion from the drawing room. He thought he knew what that was this mother had just blasted him off the family tree, just as she had Cousin Andromeda and poor old Uncle Alphard. Surprising himself, Sirius realised he didn't care. He was finally free of number twelve, Grimmauld Place, and he was never going back.

Out on the front steps, Sirius bumped his trunk down onto the pavement, and then stopped to consider his next move. He had been so keen to leave that he hadn't given any thought to what he was going to do once he *had* left. He sat down on the trunk and tried to quell the feeling of nausea that had risen in his throat. He half considered going back indoors, but no, nothing was worth that. "Think, Sirius, think!" If he didn't get out of here soon someone would report him to the police, and they wouldn't be impressed by a sixteen-year-old boy with a broomstick and a trunk full of potions ingredients.

Suddenly it came to him the Knight Bus! It wasn't really surprising he'd only just thought of it; his family never used the Bus in case they had to sit next to "filthy little Mudbloods". Considering how rabid they were about blood purity, Sirius thought, it was amazing they lived in a Muggle area of London.

Sirius stuck out his wand arm and nearly fell over as the violently purple triple-decker materialised from nowhere. A pimply youth probably a few years older than Sirius was himself, and sporting a purple uniform, jumped out and launched into his spiel.

'Welcome to the Knight Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard. My name is Sid Shunpike, and I will be your conductor this evening.'

He helped Sirius heave his heavy trunk onto the bus and Sirius' mouth fell open at the sight of a bus with beds in it. Sid smirked at Sirius' astounded face and reverted to his script.

'The Knight Bus can take you anywhere you want to go. He grinned at Sirius. 'Where's it gonna be then?'

Sirius considered. Where *could* he go? Not Hogwarts; that was closed for the summer. And he didn't much fancy spending the next two months in the Hog's Head; he wanted looking after. Sirius would rather eat Stinksap than admit it, but he needed mothering. He made up his mind.

'Godric's Hollow.'

The front door of the Potters' house opened a crack, and Mrs Potter's scared face peeped out. Recognising Sirius, she flung the door open with a cry. 'Goodness, Sirius dear, you gave me a shock! Come in quickly. Are you all right?'

'Yeah,' Sirius said breathlessly, heaving his trunk over the threshold. 'Well, no, not really.' He swallowed and forced down the rising sense of panic and misery that had been threatening to engulf him ever since he had left his parents' house. 'Can I stay here for a while?' he blurted out. 'I can't stick it at home any longer!'

Mrs Potter shut the front door and then enfolded the shaking boy in her arms. 'Of course you can, dear. Now, come in and tell me what's happened.'

To his acute embarrassment, Sirius felt tears gathering at the corners of his eyes. He was sixteen years old and crying like a baby. But he couldn't remember the last time he had been hugged like this. Certainly not since he had been at Hogwarts. His mother had never been the maternal type and, for the last five years, any affection she did feel had been reserved for Regulus.

'Hallo, son.' James' dad had entered the hall. His term of address was not lost on Sirius, who smiled gratefully, dashed the tears from his eyes and held out his hand. Mr Potter, however, pulled him into a rough hug. 'You're welcome to stay as long as you like, son, you know that,' he said gruffly as he released the boy.

They were about to go into the living room when there was a cry of 'PADFOOT!' and James Potter came hurtling down the stairs, two at a time. Then he took in his best friend's strained face and the school trunk. 'Come upstairs, mate,' James said quickly, 'Let's get your stuff into the spare room.'

Upstairs, in the spare bedroom, James helped Sirius to unpack.

'Had to leave all my posters behind,' Sirius said, ruefully, 'even Ursula. Stuck them to the wall with Permanent Sticking Charms to piss my mother off.'

'We'll go to the Muggle newsagent in Black Dog village tomorrow,' James promised, 'get some more. You'll have to keep them under the bed though. Mum and Dad would die of shock if they saw them!'

Sirius started with shock himself. 'Black Dog? Seriously?'

'Yeah, seriously.' James grinned at the look on Sirius' face. 'You've never been, have you? Just don't transform or you'll scare half the villagers into fits!'

Sirius smiled, feeling the knot of panic in his chest relax. He reached into his trunk and, almost shyly, held out his new broomstick to show James. 'Look at this.'

'No way, you've got a Nimbus 1500!' James exclaimed. 'Where did you get that?'

'Uncle Alphard died,' Sirius said, his face clouding over. 'Left me shedloads of gold. Mum and Dad were livid.' Suddenly, he grinned. 'Gonna get a house of my own when I'm seventeen, so you won't have to put up with me for too long.'

'Don't be daft; it's great having you here. Can I have a go on the Nimbus?'

'Yeah, course. Why don't you get your parents to buy you one? Bet you did brilliantly in your OWLs.'

'Ten Os,' James replied, nonchalantly.

'Me too,' Sirius said, matching James' off-hand tone. He looked suddenly self-conscious. 'Will you help me practise? Thought I'd try out for the Quidditch team now I've got a decent broom.'

'Yeah, do! What do you want to try out for?'

'Beater,' said Sirius savagely. 'Then I can beat up Regulus without getting detention.'

James laughed. 'Pity old Snivelly's not on the team. Tell you what, imagine he is and you'll walk the trials!'

Sirius laughed too. Girly mags, Quidditch, and insulting Snape. This was going to be the best summer he'd ever had.

Disclaimer: This was originally posted on Sycophant Hex. The world and characters belong to JK Rowling; the plot alone is mine. No copyright infringement is intended and I make no money from this.

Black Dog is a real village near Crediton in Devon. As Godric's Hollow is somewhere in the West Country (and it has always sounded Devonian to me), I thought it was appropriate. I chose to have the Potters live in Godric's Hollow, as that is where the Peverell family is buried.

The conductor of The Knight Bus is Stan Shunpike's father as this story is set in the generation before Harry. The Shunpike family speech is from POA Ch 3.