

As October Dies

by charmed3

In memory of James and Lily Potter on the 25th anniversary of their death, 31st October, 2006.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Friday 30th October, 1981 – 9:00pm

"Well, it's over with. We've placed all our trust in our friends," James said as he walked into Harry's nursery where Lily was changing their son into his sleepwear.

"I don't feel good about this, James, I really don't. Why was Sirius so adamant?" Lily asked, picking Harry up and holding him close to her chest.

"After what happened with Regulus, I'd hazard a guess that he knew where Voldemort would go next. He doesn't want to have reason to be a target – we need him in the Order."

"I suppose you're right," she said, relenting slightly. "What's that you have?" Lily pointed to the gold chain protruding from his fist.

"Sirius brought it here for safekeeping; said that since we ourselves are being 'safe-kept', it's the perfect place." James held out his open palm to show Lily a heavy golden locket, and even with slightly tarnished metal, it looked very valuable to him – besides the fact that it was heavy. His mother had always told him as a child, when he used play with her ornaments, that if they were heavy, they were likely to be expensive, and he wasn't to touch unless he understood their worth.

Lily gasped. "I've seen that locket before – there's a picture of it in *Hogwarts: A History*. It's Salazar Slytherin's old locket!"

"You read too much, Lils," James said, but he looked at the locket a little bit more closely, noting the serpentine 'S' embossed on the front. "Though I do reckon that you're correct in your assumption of its origin."

He reached to take Harry from her, thereby missing the extravagant roll of her emerald eyes.

"So where on earth did Sirius find this?" Lily enquired as she smoothed her son's untidy hair while he watched her happily over James' shoulder.

"No idea. He mentioned Regulus, but he didn't have time to go into details – he just told me to keep it safe until he could come back for it."

"So where are you going to put it?"

"The safest place I know." He smiled and lovingly caressed his wife's cheek before pulling her into his embrace, with Harry nestled comfortably between them, humming quietly.

"You have news for me, Wormtail?" The soft voice was like ice, raising the hairs on the back of the young man's neck.

"Y-yes, master," said Wormtail, and he screwed up his courage to look up at his master seated before him, blood-red eyes staring at him pitilessly, that awful snake curled up in his lap.

"Well, please waste no more of my time."

"James and Lily Potter have a secret; a secret contained within my soul--"

"The soul that conveniently belongs to me."

"Yes, master." Wormtail took a deep breath, his heart turning cold, like the voice of his enslaver. "James, Lily and Harry Potter can be found at number seven, Godric's Hollow."

Saturday 31st October, 1981 – 8:00pm

Lily stood at the window of Harry's nursery with the locket in her hand, gazing out into the street beyond the house at the children, all dressed up in costumes going door-to-door to collect their treats... or tricks, laughing and happy. She could hear James playing with Harry in the next room as he gave Harry his bath. Would Harry have the opportunity to have a happy childhood?

Tears came to her eyes as her mind began to take a hold of the situation. They were in danger – more danger than they'd ever been in their lives, and she was terrified. They were relying on their friends to keep them safe, rather than Dumbledore, who had been her first choice as their Secret Keeper, but James had insisted, "*Peter is the least likely to be found, given his Animagus form alone. I trust him with my life, Lily. If it makes you feel any better, Sirius is keeping a close watch on him for us.*" But it hadn't made her feel much better. She understood why Sirius had asked them to change Keepers, but something in her gut told her that it was a bad idea. Still, she wasn't about to tell James this as she could have said 'no' at any time before switching the two men.

She listened to Harry laughing and splashing, and her heart broke for him. What would his life be like, always in hiding, never knowing who to trust, whom to call a friend? She couldn't hold back a sob as she thought, why this family? Why Harry? What did they do to deserve this?

Harry grew restless as the night wore on. He fussed to be put into his sleeper, fussed even worse to be put to bed, but eventually, they left him in his cot hoping that he would exhaust himself and go to sleep. James and Lily sat on their sitting room couch, both exhausted from worrying themselves. They knew that the Order was working on a safer place for them to live, even as they sat there, and it gave them a little bit of comfort. They watched the children in costumes run past their window, bags of sweets in their hands, completely carefree.

James closed his eyes and hugged Lily closer. *Just for a few moments, let my family know peace.*

Harry let out a piercing wail from upstairs.

"I'll go to him," Lily said tiredly. "I'll meet you in bed, alright?"

James kissed her. "I love you, Evans."

She smiled. "Love you too, Potter."

Amidst the children, a figure in a black cloak swished in the fallen red and gold leaves that littered the streets of Godric's Hollow.

James' blood ran cold.

Lily's foot was on the first stair.

"Lily, he's here."

"What?"

"Voldemort. He's here."

"What?"

Eyes unmoving from the window, James saw the figure stop and turn, just at their pathway, hidden from all those but one soul. Oh my God.

"Lily, take Harry and go! It's him! Go! Run! I'll hold him off--"

"But--"

"Don't argue! Just go!"

Lily tripped up the steps and flung open the door to Harry's nursery, ripping out from her robes her wand. There was shouting and horrible blasting noises coming from downstairs, and then... silence. She cast every locking spell she could think of and hurled herself at Harry's cot.

He lay on his back, screaming at the top of his lungs. She jabbed her wand at him. *Silencio!* He continued to cry, but with no sound. She picked him up and held his tiny, wracking frame close to her, listening for anything, any hope that James was alive. A cackle of high pitched laughter emanated from downstairs, making the hairs on her arms stand on end. The laughter was coming closer. Gasping, she tried to pull herself together for her child; she closed her eyes and thought hard of her sister, Petunia, and her house in Privet Drive. Her sister was her only hope. She held Harry tightly and prepared to turn.

The door was blasted off its hinges. Voldemort was in the room. It was too late. She placed Harry in his cot and stood in front of it, her wand raised, ready to defend him.

"Give me the boy." His voice was pure frost.

"No."

He made a slashing movement with his wand, and she was down on her knees, blood blossoming from her flesh onto torn robes. He came closer. *No!* She struggled to her feet again, blocking her son with her body.

"I will ask you once again, give me the boy."

"No! Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!"

"Stand aside you silly girl... Stand aside now."

"Not Harry, please, no, take me, kill me instead – he doesn't deserve this!"

Voldemort raised his wand again, pointing it at Lily. "You don't have to die, girl, just give him to me."

"Not Harry! Please ... have mercy ... have mercy..."

"Mercy?" Voldemort burst into laughter again.

"Avada Kedavra!"

The scream from Lily Potter's throat rent the still air, heard by no one.

Friday 31st October 1997 – 5:00pm

Harry Potter sat in the grass in the graveyard where his parents' headstones marked their resting places. He smiled.

"It's over," he said hoarsely. "He's gone."