

# There Will Never Be Another You

*by ilovemysiri*

Entering a new world, making new friends, facing profound rivalries, falling in love,  
and battling the darkest wizard of the age. These are my years at Hogwarts.

## Prologue

*Chapter 1 of 3*

Entering a new world, making new friends, facing profound rivalries, falling in love, and battling the darkest wizard of the  
age. These are my years at Hogwarts.

### Prologue

What is love? Across generations, many witches, wizards, and Muggles alike have tried in vain to answer this question satisfactorily. I myself have spent years thinking about it until I finally came up with one conclusion.

Love cannot be explained. It should not be explained. There are no words to describe love. Love is something that just happens, and all of a sudden, your life isn't your own anymore. Every decision that you make from there on out will be with the said object of affection in mind. Love is a feeling that can only be felt. It's too complicated to even try to fathom. Even when you are in love, you cannot describe properly what you are feeling. In short, love is the one emotion that deals nothing with the mind and everything with the heart.

The story of my life deals a lot with the concept of love. Throughout all my years, I have come to realize that the most important thing that has ever happened to me was love. After all is said and done, everyone knows that love is all there is. Everything in life boils down to something so plain and simple, but so infinitely complicated at the same time: love.

In thinking about how best to retell my story, it seems so surreal to me how much we have all been through since the beginning. Life for me began on a cloudy June day when I arrived at the London Airport, not knowing the turn my life would take as I walked into the busy streets for the first time.

I guess now the question is how I came to be in England anyway. Well, that was decided many months ago when my dad was asked to start an American chain of markets in Europe. Although it was a very big move for us, my dad decided it was what was best for the family and more specifically... me. This would mean that we had to leave our relatives, friends, and our whole life behind to come to this strange new place where we knew no one and try to make a living. It was a very big step but one that I, for one, was willing to make in order to leave the place where I knew no happiness.

Within a month or so, something strange and unexpected happened. A tall, thin, rather old man with long silver hair and beard appeared at our doorstep. What was even stranger was that he was wearing long robes, a cloak that swept the ground, and boots. He had blue eyes that were twinkling in a very friendly and somehow comforting way behind half-moon spectacles. This man introduced himself as Albus Dumbledore.

But it didn't stop there. The strange old man explained how I was invited to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry because I was, for want of a better word, special. I almost burst out laughing in the man's face because surely this man had to be crazy. The idea that magic existed was preposterous. The man kept on explaining

about the classes and about how I would be going there for the next seven years. He also talked about a place called Diagon Alley in which I would be able to buy all my supplies. My parents weren't quite convinced until the man took out a wooden stick and pointed it at a teacup, which promptly started flying until it reached the table between us. By that point, my parents had the look that suggested they very much wanted to beat this man out of the house. But after a little more explanation, it was decided that I would go mainly because an untrained witch can be a danger to herself and to everyone around her.

This is where my story begins. It's a story about death, destruction, loss, friendship, trust, but mostly it's about love. Without further ado, I give you my years at Hogwarts.

## First Years

### *Chapter 2 of 3*

The alliances are being formed and the rivalries are being set

#### First Year

Nearly a month later, I was walking into King's Cross Station with a trunk full of spell books, potion ingredients, and frogspawn. On my shoulder sat a beautiful snowy white owl, which I christened Hersheys.

As we walked through the station, I constantly looked around to see if I could spot anyone else that would look like a witch or wizard. But the station was basically deserted. I took a deep breath as I reached Platforms 9 and 10.

"Well, I'm guessing this is it," I said to my parents. They looked at me with weird faces.

"We're going to miss you. Be good," my mom said, tears in her eyes.

"Oh, Mom, come on. I'll see you on Christmas."

"I know. But you've never been away from us for so long."

"Don't worry, Mom. Everything is going to be fine." I looked at the clock on the wall. "Now really, I have to go."

"Alright, be good."

"Write often," my dad added.

"I will." I kissed them both and gave them a quick hug.

Then I turned to face the barrier between Platforms 9 and 10. Professor Dumbledore had given me the instructions of how to get on Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  but as I stared at the very solid-looking barrier, I began to have doubts. I started pushing the trolley toward the very solid wall and held my breath. With every step, I gathered more speed until I felt I was going to lose control. Just as I was about to hit the wall, I closed my eyes to brace myself for the crash. But it didn't come.

When I opened my eyes again, I gasped. A huge train with a gleaming engine stood there. The sign over it read, The Hogwarts Express. All along the platform were students greeting each other after a long summer, parents saying goodbye, owls hooting and cats meowing. I was more intimidated then ever.

I walked slowly onto the train with my trunk, my face shining with sweat from the effort of pulling it. I passed through the open compartments, trying to find an empty one. As I was nearing the end of a train, a friendly-looking girl with a round face popped her head out of one of the compartments.

"Need some help?" she kindly asked.

"Yes, please," I responded gratefully.

She smiled and helped me drag my trunk into the compartment. Once it was tucked away, I turned to her and said, "Thanks."

"No problem. My name is Alice, by the way. Alice Remerta."

"Beatriz Carricaburu."

"And this is Lily Evans."

I turned to look at the other girl in the compartment. She was beautiful. She had beautiful red curls, a fair complexion, and vivid green eyes. It would be a very long time before I would see eyes like hers again.

"Hi," I said, smiling warmly. She returned the greeting with a smile.

"So, I'm guessing you're not from England are

you?" Alice asked.

"Is it that obvious?" I asked.

"Well, your last name is a giveaway."

I laughed. "I was born in Miami. The United States," I added, looking at their quizzical faces. "My parents are both Cuban, although my last name is Spanish."

"Wow. How cool!" Lily exclaimed.

"Yeah, sure," I added sarcastically. "Frankly, I can't wait to get rid of my last name."

Both girls laughed at this statement.

"So are your parents witches and wizards?" Lily asked.

"No, actually."

"Oh, just like Lily! Both of you are Muggle-borns," Alice exclaimed.

"Muggle what?" I asked.

"Muggle-borns. Muggle means non-magic folk. So Muggle-born means your parents are Muggles. Half-blood means one magic parent and one Muggle parent, and pureblood means both parents are magical."

Lily and I looked at her in awe.

"This year is going to be tough," I muttered.

"Don't worry. You'll learn quickly enough. Loads of witches and wizards are Muggle-born, and they get accustomed easily. Besides, you have me. I'll teach you everything you need to know."

"Thanks."

"That's a beautiful owl you have there," Lily said, pointing at Hersheys.

"Yeah, I loved her from the moment I saw her. She was expensive though. Her name is Hersheys."

"Hello, Hersheys," Alice said, stroking her long feathers. "I sure hope we're all in the same house."

"Well, duh. We're going to the same place aren't we?" I asked.

"Oh but I mean Hogwarts house. You wouldn't know. Hogwarts students are divided into four groups called Houses. They are Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, and... Slytherin," she ended darkly.

"What's with the lovely tone?" I asked.

Smiling, she continued. "Each house has its own qualities that make them unique. Each house has produced outstanding witches and wizards. Gryffindor is known for its courage, Ravenclaw for intelligence, Hufflepuff for loyalty, and Slytherin for ambition."

"That still doesn't explain your tone," I commented.

"You have to understand that not all wizards are good. Some go bad. And there hasn't been a single witch or wizard who went bad who wasn't in Slytherin."

"Oh my!" Lily exclaimed.

"Exactly." She bent closer to us and, talking in a low voice continued, "For example, I have heard a lot of muttering lately about a wizard people call...You-Know-Who. This wizard, he's gathering a lot of followers. He's a very Dark wizard from what I've heard."

"What does he want?" Lily asked, breathless.

"He wants to 'purify' the wizarding race. In other words, get rid of all the Muggle-borns and half-bloods. Then of course he wants to reign over the wizarding world."

Lily gasped. "That's terrible."

"It's complete rubbish though. Most of us are half-bloods or less. We have to marry Muggles or we'd die out."

Lily let out a worried moan.

"So how do we get put in these houses?" I asked, trying to liven up the conversation.

"Well, my parents told me about a Sorting Hat, which you put on your head, and it takes a look inside your mind and decides which house you should go to."

"Oh, okay. I thought we were going to have to perform magic already."

"Oh, of course not. No first year knows magic enough to do that. Not even purebloods. So you don't have to worry about being behind. You guys haven't heard about Quidditch yet have you?"

We both shook our heads. Alice quickly jumped into a detailed explanation about the sport. She explained to us the rules, the best Quidditch teams, and games she had been to. With each passing sentence, Lily and I grew more in awe of this strange new world we had been thrown into.

After Quidditch, Alice explained everything she knew and could think of about the magical world. We were suddenly interrupted by a loud bang from outside the compartment.

"What was that?" I asked, getting up quickly.

"I don't know," Alice said, following me.

I opened up the compartment door, and a foul smell permeated into the compartment.

"That's disgusting!" Lily exclaimed, covering her nose. Alice and I did the same.

"Dung bomb," Alice explained.

People's heads popped out of the compartments, and several shrieks and grunts of disgust could be heard. Out of the loud commotion, there came hysterical laughter. Four boys appeared through the smoke looking at the complete state of disarray.

"That was good, James," one of them said, patting the other on the back.

"Oh, but I should've known. James Potter and Sirius Black at it again," Alice said, smiling. "Do you guys ever give it a rest?"

"Never," the boy with untidy black hair said.

"Look, Alice, let us introduce to you our new additions, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew," the other boy said.

"Hi," Alice said. "Are you guys sure of what you're getting into?"

"Not anymore," Remus Lupin said, smiling.

"Well, these are my new friends, Beatriz Carricaburu and Lily Evans." She turned to us. "Guys, this is Sirius Black and James Potter. You don't want to be seen with them. They are big trouble."

"Oh, Alice, please. You know life wouldn't be that much fun without me in it," James Potter said.

"Right, James. Anyways, guys, we'll talk to you later. We need to do some damage control," Sirius said.

"Alright," Alice said. After they disappeared into the cloud of foul smelling smoke, we settled back into our compartment. "Sirius Black and James Potter. Quite the combination, let me tell you."

"They seem to be so immature!" Lily commented.

"They love to have their little laughs every now and then. But they are good people."

"Are they first-years too?" Lily asked.

"Yep. Doesn't look like it does it?" I shook my head.

"They run on confidence and ego, that's why."

All of us laughed and continued talking about the soon-to-be infamous James Potter and Sirius Black.

\*\*\*\*\*

"First-years. First-years this way!" a booming voice shouted throughout Hogsmeade Station.

We had just arrived at the station, and everyone was pushing to get through. I tried to make my way to the voice, and Lily and Alice held onto my robes to stay together.

When we came face to face with the owner of the voice, Alice and Lily gasped. "He's HUGE!"

I smiled and said, "Cool."

Once all the first years had gathered up around the gigantic man, he led us away from the station and onto a deck that was lined with boats. "Alright, no more than four to a boat now."

Alice, Lily, and I got into a boat and were soon joined by another boy.

"Alright, Frank?" Alice asked.

"Alright. Did you have fun on the train? I didn't see you throughout the journey."

"Yeah, I was hanging out with these two girls. Beatriz, Lily, meet Frank Longbottom."

"Hey," Lily and I said.

"You'll get your first view of Hogwarts around this corner here," the giant man called.

As we turned the corner, there were a lot of gasps, oohs and aahs.

It was a truly magnificent sight. The Hogwarts castle was set up on a set of mountains, surrounded by beautiful fields. The windows seemed to gleam in a friendly manner against the dark sky. The dark towers looked majestic and gave off an air of tradition, royalty, and... magic.

Our vision was soon obscured, however, as the boats reached an underground harbor where we all got off. The giant Hagrid led us to a large wooden door, and he knocked three times.

A middle-aged woman with a tight bun and a severe-looking face immediately opened the door. My first impression was that she was not a woman to mess around with.

"Good evening, Hagrid."

"Evening, Professor McGonagall. I have the first-years."

"Thank you. I'll take them from here."

We followed Professor McGonagall in silence into an amazing Entrance Hall with a large, gleaming staircase leading to the upper floors. Several large houses would have fit into the hall comfortably. She also led us right up to a large wooden door where she stopped and turned around.

"Welcome to Hogwarts. In a few moments you will pass through these doors and join your classmates, but before you do, you must be sorted into your houses. They are Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Now while you're here, your house will be like your family. You will have classes with your house, sleep in your house dormitories, and spend free time in your house common room.

"Each house has its own noble history, and each house has its own outstanding witches and wizards." At this comment, Alice looked at me significantly. "While you are here, your triumphs will earn you points, while any rule-breaking will lose you points." At this statement, she glanced at James. "At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the House Cup, a great honor.

"The Sorting Ceremony will begin momentarily. You will stay here until we're ready for you."

As soon as she was gone, the voice of Sirius Black whispered loudly, "You're on her bad side already, James."

I exchanged a glance with Lily. She looked very pale, her red hair showing up even more vividly around her face. Alice too looked very nervous. She was biting her lower lip and was softly shaking.

"Don't worry, girls. Everything will be fine," I whispered, sounding much more confident than I felt.

"I hope so. I'm so scared to be put in Slytherin," Alice whispered.

Before I could comfort her, McGonagall came back.

"We're ready for you."

She opened the grand doors and led the way into the Great Hall. This was even bigger than the Entrance Hall, with four long tables filled with students, and a fifth table facing them that was filled with teachers, including the giant called Hagrid and Professor Dumbledore with his silver beard shining and his eyes twinkling in the candlelight. Maybe it was the effect of the lights, but he looked strangely powerful.

Along the edge of the room were candles floating in mid-air. Transparent silver ghosts were sitting at the edge of each of the four long house tables. Most remarkable of all was the ceiling that revealed all the skies above.

"There's no ceiling," Alice commented.

"Yes, there is," I said before I could stop myself. "It's bewitched to look like the sky outside."

"How do you know?"

"I read about it in 'Hogwarts, A History.'"

Alice giggled softly.

Lily looked like if she had just stepped into the craziest dream. Her green eyes were wide and staring.

We stopped in front of the teachers' table. There stood the most disgusting and dirtiest hat on top of a stool.

McGonagall faced us with a long list in front of her. "When I call your name, you will come forth and place the sorting hat on your head. Evans Abercrombie."

A tiny boy stepped forward nervously and placed the hat on his head. After a moment or two, the hat shouted, "HUFFLEPUFF!"

The second house on the left erupted in cheers. Evans took off the hat and walked over to the Hufflepuff table with a relieved look on his face.

A few names later McGonagall called, "Bellatrix Black."

A girl with shiny dark hair, heavily lidded eyes, and a strong jaw walked forward. She was very pretty but her face was lined with cold features.

She placed the hat on her head confidently. With absolutely no hesitation the hat shouted, "SLYTHERIN!"

"Narcissa Black."

Narcissa looked nothing like her sister. She had blonde hair that fell down to her waist and cold, empty blue eyes. The beauty apparently ran in the family.

"SLYTHERIN!"

For the second time in a row, the table on the far left cheered. Narcissa went to sit down next to her sister looking quite pleased with herself.

"Sirius Black."

"He's their brother?" I asked Alice.

"No," she said grimly. "Narcissa and Bellatrix are sisters, and Sirius is their cousin. They are a pain in the neck though. Sirius is nothing like them."

I looked at the Sorting Hat thoughtfully. It was taking the longest yet. After what seemed like an eternity, the hat bellowed, "GRYFFINDOR!"

The table on the right cheered. Sirius took off the hat and let out a huge breath. He regained his composure quickly and bowed deeply, causing everyone to laugh, and then went to sit down at the Gryffindor table.

"Beatriz Carricaburu."

Lily and Alice gave me an encouraging smile, and I gracefully walked to the stool. Once the hat was on my head, I heard a voice whispering in my ear.

"Wow, a lot of talent I see. Very intelligent too. Maybe I should put you in Ravenclaw..."

I tensed at this statement, not quite sure why.

"No? Oh my! I seem to have missed all the bravery! Yes, I know just what to do with you..."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

I let out a deep breath, and my body relaxed. I took off the hat and walked to the Gryffindor table, smiling broadly.

"I don't think I've introduced myself properly," Sirius said, extending his hand. "Sirius Black."

"Beatriz Carricaburu," I said, shaking his hand.

"Did the hat try to put you in Slytherin too? I saw you tense up while you were wearing it."

"No, it tried to put me in Ravenclaw. I wouldn't have minded though. From what I've heard, anything is better than Slytherin."

"It is. I was basically fighting with it because it wanted me in Slytherin. My entire family was in Slytherin."

He smiled grimly, and I turned back to the Sorting.

"Lily Evans."

Lily walked up to the hat with an air of confidence.

"GRYFFINDOR!"

I cheered loudly as she came to sit down in front of Sirius. We smiled broadly at each other and high-fived.

Sirius also introduced himself to Lily. She smiled politely, but I could tell she still thought of him with disapproval.

Many names later, McGonagall called, "Rabastan Lestranger."

A fairly good-looking boy walked to the Sorting hat, sporting a smirk across his face. Something about him seemed unpleasant.

"SLYTHERIN."

"Rodolphus Lestrangle."

His brother walked up, wearing the exact same expression on his face.

"SLYTHERIN."

"Bunch of gits," Sirius growled.

"Frank Longbottom."

The boy who joined us in the boat walked up, looking a little pale.

"GRYFFINDOR."

We clapped and cheered and Frank, with a triumphant smile, came to sit next to Lily.

"Remus Lupin."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

Remus smiled and came to sit down next to me.

"Hello," he said with a shy smile. "I'm Remus. We met on the train but we haven't been formally introduced."

"Hi," I said warmly. "Beatriz Carricaburu."

"Lucius Malfoy."

A tall boy strutted towards the Sorting Hat. He had, by far, the most evil look on his face.

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Git," Sirius muttered once again.

A few names later, "Peter Pettigrew."

The short little boy ran up the stool and put on the hat. After a good 30 seconds, the hat shouted, "GRYFFINDOR!"

Peter was looking ecstatic as he made his way to the Gryffindor table.

"Hey, guys!" he squeaked.

"Glad you could join us, Peter," Sirius said.

"James Potter."

"No doubt at all that he's going to be..." Sirius whispered.

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Knew it!"

"Jamesie!" Sirius said, high-fiving James.

"Stop calling me Jamesie damn it!" James said, although he couldn't help but laugh.

He quickly introduced himself to Lily and I.

"Fabian Prewett."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Gideon Prewett."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Oh, great, we have the twins," James said.

"Twins? They look nothing alike!" I said.

"Yeah but they were born on the same day. We like to think that Fabian was a mistake," Sirius said.

I laughed quietly as Gideon and Fabian introduced themselves to the table and sat down.

"Alice Remerta."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Yes!" Lily and I muttered.

"Hey, guys," she said cheerfully, making Frank scoot over so she could sit next to Lily.

"I swear, its like if the devil brought us together every time," James said.

"For real," Sirius agreed.

"Severus Snape."

A pale little boy quickly walked up to Sorting Hat, looking straight at the ground. He had pale skin and greasy black hair.

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Big surprise," Sirius muttered.

No one really paid attention to the rest of the Sorting. After everyone was in their respective houses, Professor McGonagall rolled up her parchment and carried the Sorting Hat and stool out of the Hall. Meanwhile, Professor Dumbledore stood up. He smiled and held his arms open in welcome.

"Welcome to another year at Hogwarts. Before we dig our teeth into our delicious feast, I have a few start-of-term notices to give out. First, the Dark Forest is forbidden to all students. I have also been asked to remind you by Mr. Filch, the caretaker, that no magic should be used between classes in the corridors and that a few magical objects are forbidden. For a full list, see Mr. Filch. Quidditch trials will be held during the second week of school only for second years and above. If you want to try out for your house team, see Madam Hooch. Finally, I wanted to announce that we have made a new addition to our grounds. By that I mean that Professor Seed has planted a Whomping Willow. For those who don't know, a willow will attack anyone who comes close to its branches, and I would advise you not to come near it unless you want to suffer excruciating pain. Now I won't delay you from our delicious feast any longer so... tuck in!"

I looked at the gleaming plates in front of us and gasped. They were filled with every kind of food imaginable. Everything looked delicious.

"Wow," I muttered.

Not wanting to miss anything, I filled my plate with a little bit of everything.

"So, how come we've never heard of Beatriz and Lily before?" Sirius asked, eating a pork chop.

"Because, you prat, they're Muggle-born!" Alice said.

"Are you serious?" Sirius asked.

"No, you are," I said without looking up.

Everyone snorted into his or her food, and Sirius said, "Like I've never heard that one before."

"But yeah. I'm Muggle-born. I knew nothing of Hogwarts, Platform 9 ¾, Quidditch or magic."

"It must have been a real shock then," Remus said.

"Yeah, well, imagine me a month in England and suddenly late one night, this tall old man appeared at my doorstep claiming that I was a witch. My mom almost fainted."

Everyone laughed appreciatively.

"Well, we've all known each other for a while," James said.

"Unfortunately," Alice said.

"I can't wait to start Quidditch. It's a shame first years can't be on the team. I bet the team could use a Chaser as awesome as me," James said, taking a huge mouthful of corn.

Lily shot him a look that plainly said she thought him too conceited.

"You haven't seen a Quidditch game have you?" Gideon asked me excitedly. I shook my head.

"You'll love it! Best game ever! Quite

dangerous too, but that's probably the best part," Fabian said.

"Dangerous?" Lily asked apprehensively. "Just how dangerous is it?"

"No one's died from it, if that's what you're thinking," Remus said.

"Just a concussion," Sirius said.

"Or broken ribs," James added.

"Or disarranged face," Frank said.

"But stuff like that rarely happens, so you don't need to worry," Alice said quickly, catching the look of horror on Lily's face.

"What do you guys think will be the hardest class?" Peter piped up nervously.

"Potions, probably," Remus said. "You have to be incredibly precise."

"Actually, I think Potions is going to be rather easy. I'm fascinated by it," Lily said.

Everyone stared at her questioningly.

"I've read all the course books," she said simply.

"My dad tells me Charms was hard." James said.

"Everyone says Transfiguration is the hardest though," Frank commented. "McGonagall is probably the hardest teacher in this school."

Everyone muttered their agreement at this statement.

The rest of the evening passed without further incident. We continued talking and getting to know one another. After the feast was over, Dumbledore sent us off to our respective common rooms, led by the prefects.

\*\*\*\*\*

"So how did you guys like everyone?" Alice said later that night, once we were in our dormitory.

"James and Sirius were so immature!" Lily said at once.

"Lily, don't be so hard on them. They just like to have a laugh," I said amusedly.

"Did you not hear about the hideous pranks they would play on everyone?" Lily asked.

"It was all in good fun, though," Alice said.

"Well, I find nothing funny in them. It's awfully childish," she said.

"But you know, Lily, I'm not trying to defend him or anything, but they're really a very good friends when you need them.... putting aside all their flaws," Alice said seriously. "All of them are. Just wait until you guys get really acquainted with them. You'll learn to love them!"

"Whatever," Lily said.

With that final statement, Lily got into her bed and pulled the hanging closed. Alice and I exchanged amused glances before we both got into our own beds.

As the warm sheets enveloped my body, I couldn't help but feel that I was starting a big adventure. I smiled into my pillow. I certainly did like Hogwarts.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Welcome, first-years, to Transfiguration. Transfiguration is one of the most complex and dangerous magics you will learn at Hogwarts. Anyone messing around will leave and not come back. You have been warned."

That was how Professor McGonagall greeted us for our first lesson ever in Hogwarts.

After the warning, McGonagall tapped her wand on the board, and a bunch of writing appeared. It looked like some weird, foreign language.

Lily and I exchanged glances and then started taking complicated notes. Most of the class was spent learning the basics of the spell we were about to perform. After, we were all given a match that we had to transform into a needle.

I swished my wand, and immediately the match turned shiny and silver.

"Well, this isn't so bad," I commented.

I looked at Lily to see if she had done it too, but she let out a groan of frustration. In fact, as I looked around, I realized that no one had changed his or her match into a needle on the very first try.

"Professor," I began, raising my hand. "I did it already."

She looked up at me with surprised eyes. Everyone turned to stare at me. I felt my face growing hot as she looked at my match (or needle) and examined it closely. Then she turned it back into a match. "Do it again."

I swallowed nervously and swished my wand again. The match turned into a needle instantly.

"Excellent! 20 points to Gryffindor! Very good, Beatriz!" She smiled at me, and I smiled back.

Everyone started whispering to each other, and I couldn't hide the satisfaction from my face.

By the end of the lesson, the only other person who had managed to transfigure the match was James.

"I don't understand how you managed to do that!" Lily exclaimed, clearly very frustrated.

We were both walking toward the courtyard for our break.

"What are you talking about? It was easy! I thought everyone would have been able to do it," I said.

"Clearly not. You're going to have to teach me."

As the four boys passed by us in the hall, James smiled and high-fived me.

"Good one, Be."

After they disappeared, I turned to Lily.

"See Lily? He's not that bad," I said.

"Whatever. I'd rather not talk about him."

We joined Alice, Frank, Gideon, and Fabian in the courtyard.

"Well, that was hard," Alice commented. "You're awesome at it, Be! You did it on your first try!"

"Be?" I asked. I was surprised at the nickname I had already been christened with.

"You don't mind do you?" Alice said quickly.

"Not at all."

"I'm sensing that you're going to have to teach us all Transfiguration, Be," Fabian said.

"I'm sure you guys will get it. It's not that hard. I honestly thought I was going to be miles behind you people," I said.

"Well, our families don't actually let us do magic when we are little kids. It can go seriously wrong," Gideon explained.

"Well, well, well. Look who it is. The Prewett brothers, Longbottom, and Remerta," a very unpleasant voice drawled.

We all turned to come face to face with a bunch of Slytherins. Lucius Malfoy, the Lestrangle brothers, Severus Snape, Bellatrix, and Narcissa Black.

"Oh, great. You lot," Fabian said coolly.

"You all are a disgrace! Look at you, already making friends with the Mudbloods," Bellatrix sneered.

Lily and I exchanged glances. Neither of us knew what a Mudblood was.

"Judging by their faces, they have no idea what a Mudblood is," Snape said.

The group started laughing.

"Do you people have nothing better to do than to ruin our day?" Gideon asked.

"No, I think we should educate them," Rodolphus Lestrangle said, a smirk coming across his face.



"Mudbloods," Bellatrix said stepping closer to me; her face was merely inches from my own, "are vermin like you who have no magic in their blood. You should know that you'd never be as good as any pureblood, like us."

I stared at her for a second and then raised my eyebrows. "At least I don't look like you. That would have been a more terrible fate."

The Gryffindors started snickering.

"I'll teach you the proper way to talk to your superiors..." Lucius said, taking out his wand.

"Hey, Lucy, how about you go cry in a corner or something," a voice said from behind the Slytherins. James, Remus, Sirius, and Peter had just shown up. "No one likes you. You're polluting our air."

"Blood traitors are just as bad as Mudbloods," Rabastan said nastily, eyeing Sirius.

Before Sirius could retaliate, the bell rang, signaling the start of class.

"Until next time, cousin dearest," Bellatrix said, walking back up to the castle. The rest of the Slytherins gave us one last look of contempt before leaving after her.

"Don't listen to them, girls," Remus said. "Some people have dragon dung for brains."

I looked to the ground and nodded. The conversation with Alice on the train resurfaced in my mind. Could people actually live with that sort of prejudice? Are some witches and wizards that stupid?

All of these questions swam in my mind as the group made their way to Charms. One glance at Lily, and I knew she felt exactly as I did. We were outcasts. We were strangers mixed in with this wonderful group of people who knew everything there was to know about the magical world. They felt completely at home with it. Lily and I however felt lost. Lost in a dark abyss where no one would help you find your way.

"Beatriz, you've been awfully quiet today," Alice said that night at dinner. "Are you still thinking about what the Slytherins said?"

"How can I not, Alice?" I asked her in a subdued manner.

Lily, who was sitting next to me, did not speak but stared at her plate in silence.

"Listen to me; the Slytherins attack people because they want to get this exact same reaction from you. They want to crawl under your skin, get into your head. You can't let them. They are all a bunch of idiots who make the rest of us look bad. Most of the wizarding world doesn't think like them. Just ask around. Most of Hogwarts is not pureblood. You mustn't think on it one bit. You guys were the best out of all of us today! Doesn't that show you that it doesn't matter what kind of blood you have?"

"I guess," Lily muttered.

"Don't let them get to you. That's exactly what they want. Don't give them the satisfaction."

I inhaled deeply and then sighed. "You're right. I won't let them get to me."

"Yes, I agree," Lily said, smiling.

"That's the spirit. By the way, I loved that cheeky remark you gave Bella today. It really showed her," Alice said, smiling broadly.

"I only speak the truth," I said in a most solemn manner.

Lily and Alice giggled.

"Come on," Alice said, standing up. "Some of us need help with Transfiguration homework."

\*\*\*\*\*

"First flying lesson today with the Hufflepuffs!" Fabian said excitedly at the breakfast table. "You excited, Be?"

"Tremendously!" I exclaimed. "I can't wait. It sounds like loads of fun!"

"How about you, Lily?" Gideon asked.

"I'm not. I don't fancy going tens of feet into the air on a broomstick."

"Don't worry. You'll love it. Everyone does."

"Do you guys play Quidditch?" I asked.

"Yeah, we all do. Gideon and Fabian have always been Beaters. James, Remus, Frank, and I have played Chasers, and Sirius is an awesome Keeper," Alice explained.

"Cool. I can't wait to see if James is as good as he boasts," I said jokingly.

"He is," Frank said, joining the conversation. "He has a natural talent for it. It's almost like if he was born on a broom."

Lily rolled her eyes.

As the bell rang signaling the beginning of class, I sensed Lily's discomfort.

I let the group walk ahead of us before I spoke. "You're scared, aren't you?"

"Just a little," she said somewhat defiantly.

"Don't worry about it. It's your first time on a broom. The worst that could happen is that you fall and break your neck," I said, smiling slightly.

She couldn't help but giggle. "You're right. I'm acting as though I'm on my way to the gallows."

When we reached the field, Madam Hooch was already waiting for us along with the Hufflepuffs.

"Everyone stand by a broomstick!" she barked as soon as she saw us. "Hurry up!"

Lily was swallowing hard as she chose a broomstick between Alice and I. On my other side was Sirius. He winked and smiled slightly.

"Stick your right hand over your broom and say 'UP!'"

Everyone did as we were told, and a collective yell of "UP!" was heard. Instantly, all our broomsticks flew up to our hand.

"Wow," I whispered.

After, she showed us how to hold our brooms and how to mount it without sliding off the end.

"Now, when I blow my whistle, you kick off from the ground hard. Keep your brooms steady, rise a few feet, and then come straight back down by leaning forwards slightly," Hooch explained.

By that point, Lily's face was extremely pale, always a sign of distress. I smiled encouragingly at her. She tried to return the smile but it came off as a grimace.

"Scared, Be?" Sirius asked from my other side.

"Why would I be scared?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Most people are scared when they are going to ride for the first time. Like Evans over there. But don't worry, if you fall, I'll be sure to catch you."

"Oh, that's supposed to make me feel better?"

"It should."

"One..." Hooch began. "Two... Three!" She blew her whistle.

I took a deep breath and kicked off. I felt a slight tingling sensation in my stomach as my broom rose. I looked around and saw everyone smiling like if they were on a high. Then, we all leaned forward slightly, and the brooms gently came back down.

"Very good! I think you're the first group that hasn't tried to run off with the broom," Hooch said proudly.

I noticed Sirius and James exchange glances. The rest of the lesson consisted of kicking off and flying for a bit off the ground to get used to the sensation of flying.

"That wasn't so bad, was it, Lils?" Frank asked as the group made their way to the dungeons for their first Potions lesson.

"No, but I still prefer Charms to it," Lily said.

"You must be the first person in the history of Hogwarts to say that, Lily," Alice said, giggling.

When we arrived at the dungeons, we had to unfortunately face the Slytherins once again.

"So we meet again," Bellatrix sneered as soon as she saw me.

"Unfortunately," I sneered back.

"You should learn how to speak to greater authority," Snape said calmly. "One day you might find my wand slip and..."

"And you'll do what, Snivellus? Wipe your nose on us?" James said in a disgusted manner.

"Yeah, maybe you should go wash your hair instead of making empty threats," Sirius added.

"No one was talking to you, Potter," Snape said, his eyes boring into James'. "I expect you came into this school thinking you could con..."

"Welcome, first-years!" Professor Slughorn said, opening the dungeon door. "Come in, come in. You're in for a great lesson!"

With one last look of disgust, the Slytherins all walked into the dungeons, and the Gryffindors followed them.

"Today, you will be making a simple solution to cure boils. Now, who here..."

The rest of the lesson passed quite normally with the occasional looks of loathing between the two houses. Professor Slughorn, however, seemed not to notice. While he was head of Slytherin house, he was unbiased. In fact, by the end of the lesson, he was praising Lily on her supreme natural talent for Potions. He even invited her, along with a few other people, to the Slug Club.

\*\*\*\*\*

Maybe it was the fact that I had been having more fun than I ever had in my life, but the next few months seemed to pass in a blur. Between spending time with all my new friends, and all the homework we were getting in our classes, it came as a shock to me that we were already in mid-November.

"It is just me or does time not take on an unusual burst of speed within these walls?" I asked everyone over breakfast.

"We've just been so busy. Our classes are so hard. We spend most of our time in the library!" Gideon whined loudly.

"Well, most of us anyways," Lily said darkly. "I know of one who thinks the library beneath him."

"It's not like he needs it anyways," Frank commented. No one even had to ask who Lily was referring to. "James does pretty good more or less on all his classes."

"He gets me so mad," Lily began. We all diverted our eyes. We could all sense the tantrum coming along. "Did you see how he cursed Snape last week for no reason? He's such a prat. No one deserves to be humiliated like that."

"I personally don't see why not. Snape deserves anything he gets. He's a foul, loathsome creature." I said.

Lily picked up her goblet to take a sip.

"That was still completely..."

She stopped suddenly. "AHHHH!!!"

She dropped the goblet onto the floor as if she had been burned. The contents smashed all over the place. From inside the goblet came three medium-sized, black spiders.

The whole room had gone quiet. I stared at the goblet on the floor and then back at the shaking Lily. Her face was turning as red as her flaming hair.

"Potter! Where is he? I'm going to curse him to oblivion!" she muttered murderously.

Everyone around the hall had figured out what had happened and were all sniggering quietly. Lily stood up, searching over everyone's heads for a mess of untidy hair. Apparently, he wasn't in the hall.

Lily stormed out, Alice and I following in her wake.

"Lily..." Alice said.

"You don't even know if it was him..."

"Oh yes I do!" Lily shouted frantically.

She turned the corner and bumped into none other than James Potter himself. Sirius and Peter flanked either side of him.

"It was you, Potter!" Lily shouted, pointing at him.

"What did I do now, Lily flower?" James said, smiling sweetly.

"You put the spiders in my drink!" Lily shouted, beating her foot against the ground.

"How could I have done that when I wasn't even in the Great Hall at the time?" he said in a voice that clearly said he did indeed have something to do with it.

"I know you had something to do with this, Potter!" she screamed, her face livid.

"Well... define prank for me?"

At this statement, Sirius, Peter, Alice, and I started moving away from the fighting couple. James however did not look fearful, but rather amused.

"James Potter, I'm going to hex you so bad your own mother will think it's an improvement!"

"Has anyone ever told you how pretty you look when you're mad?" James asked her, apparently not hearing the threat that had been issued to him.

"I HATE YOU, JAMES POTTER!"

"Miss Evans!" A stern voice echoed through the hall.

We turned to face Professor McGonagall.

"What is this racket? I'm surprised at you!" McGonagall said, her lip forming her customary straight line.

"Professor, he put spiders in my drink!" Lily said in a voice of forced calm.

"Be that as it may, you should have let a teacher handle him, not cause all this commotion that can be heard 100 feet away!"

Lily looked down to her feet shamefully. "I'm sorry, Professor."

"Five points will be taken from Gryffindor for your conduct. Potter, you shall be serving detention with me tomorrow for your little joke."

"But, Professor, Sirius and I have a detention tomorrow with Professor Flitwick," James said with no shame.

"The night after then. Good day to you all."

"Come on, Lils," I said, tugging Lily's arm.

With one final look at James, she allowed me to drag her to the common room.

Over the next few days, Lily's foul mood continued. It was impossible to have a decent conversation with her in which she wouldn't bring up that "arrogant git". At the mere mention of his name or the sound of his voice, she would throw everyone within twenty feet of her the death look. Luckily for all those involved, the first Quidditch game of the season was coming up so as to take her mind off things.

"Oh my God, Lils, I'm so excited!" I said, bobbing on the balls of my feet.

"Ah, it is refreshing to experience someone's first Quidditch experience," Alice said.

As we entered the Great Hall, we noticed everyone was either wearing red and gold, or green and silver. The two houses would throw insults and glares at each other throughout breakfast. The atmosphere was excited and tense.

When the Gryffindor Team came into the hall, we all erupted in cheers.

"This is so exciting!" I said for the hundredth time in a minute. "Gryffindor better beat Slytherin!"

"I think they will. We have a good team this year. The Chasers are impeccable. It's a shame they'll be leaving next year," Frank said.

"Not to worry, Frank," James said as he sat down next to him. "You're going to have me and Remus, if I can convince him, on the line."

"What a comfort," Lily said sarcastically.

"Evans, are you still mad at me because of that little harmless incident?" James asked sweetly.

"I'd rather you not talk to me, Potter," Lily said with an air of one getting ready to start a fight.

"James. Not now," Sirius warned him as James was about to begin taunting her. He closed his mouth, his expression sour. I had the distinct feeling that James would have only obeyed Sirius.

"So where's Remus?" I asked, trying to lighten the mood.

"He's sick apparently. He's in the hospital wing. Madam Pomfrey doesn't let anyone see him though," Sirius said.

"That sucks. He's going to miss the game."

"I know. It's happened three times this year already," Sirius said, a note of concern in his voice.

After breakfast, we all made our way to the pitch. In the stadium, the atmosphere was full of energy. Each side was shouting relentlessly for their team. As for me, I was just excited to see a Quidditch game.

All the Gryffindor first years sat together, although we all made sure to not sit Lily anywhere near James. As a result, I ended up sitting between Sirius and James, while Lily was sitting next to Frank and Alice at the far end of the row.

"How did I end up in here?" I asked amusedly at my two companions.

"Fate?" James asked.

"More like dumb luck," I responded.

"Don't worry. You'll have fun with us. We'll show you everything you need to know about the game." Sirius said.

"Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the first Quidditch game of the season: Gryffindor versus Slytherin!"

The stadium roared in approval.

"We're in for an exciting game today, folks. Myself, Ludo Bagman, will make today's commentaries. The lovely Madam Hooch will be refereeing and the charming Professor McGonagall will be supervising every single comment I make."

Everyone laughed appreciatively.

"Both teams get into their positions, and the Captains fly out to shake hands... Madam Hooch prepares to blow her whistle... and THEY'RE OFF!"

The Gryffindor end of the field cheered as our Chaser took control of the Quaffle.

"GRYFFINDOR SCORED!" Ludo Bagman shouted into the microphone.

"YES!" James shouted, high-fiving me.

"Slytherins take possession of Quaffle. The Gryffindor Chaser, Minnie, is hot at his heels. Outstanding Chaser that girl is. Beautiful as well. But she says she doesn't fraternize with her Quidditch opponents."

"Bagman..." McGonagall warned.

"Right you are, Professor. Anyways, Shackbolt throws a nice Bludger, and Gryffindor is back in possession. Minnie flies towards the goal posts and what was that?"

The Slytherin Beater 'accidentally' knocked into Minnie, almost knocking her off her broom.

"FOUL!" Sirius and James shouted at the same time.

"GRYFFINDOR SCORES THE FOUL!" Bagman shouted.

After that incident, the game became increasingly dirtier. The Gryffindors managed to pull ahead, but the Slytherins used every dirty tactic they could think of to get back in the game. An hour into the game, the score was 110-110.

"Excellent game this is turning out to...Was that the Snitch?"

The crowd muttered amongst themselves and became very still and silent.

The two Seekers raced after the Snitch at incredible speeds.

Sirius, James, and I were clutching at each other, following the Seekers with our eyes. Finally, Kingsley Shackbolt aimed a Bludger at the Slytherin Seeker, throwing him off course. That cleared the way for the Gryffindor Seeker, and he was able to snatch the Snitch out of the air.

"YEAH!!!!" Sirius, James, and I shouted. We started cheering along with the rest of the Gryffindor supporters as the team made their way to the ground.

"GRYFFINDOR WINS 260-110!!!" Bagman shouted into the microphone.

Both Sirius and James were ecstatic. They were jumping around on either side of me, occasionally giving me a tight embrace.

\*\*\*\*\*

After our return from the Winter Break, Lily became a pain in the neck about end-of-year exams. While most of us thought it was too soon to be worrying about studying, Lily would constantly remind us that if we didn't pass those exams, we'd have to do the year over again.

Unfortunately for us, the teachers seemed to be thinking along the same lines as she was. They piled more homework onto us than ever before, and the classes seemed to be going at twice their usual pace.

While most of us spent our time studying and doing homework, James and his friends spent their time planning as much mischief as was possible. The targets of their pranks were usually the Slytherins. Their pranks included making a huge thunderstorm over the Slytherin table at breakfast one morning. Dark clouds would pour endlessly over their table, and their meals would occasionally get struck by lightning. They also jinxed all of the Slytherins' clothes at their game against Hufflepuff so that they were instead wearing the Gryffindor colors: red and gold.

Most people found these pranks very amusing. But then again, most people did not include Lily. While she couldn't do much to stop the boys from having their fun, she would throw them her infamous death glares any chance that she got. She soon realized that trying to intimidate them would achieve no end either, as James always took that opportunity to comment on how pretty Lily looked when her cheeks were red with anger.

At the end of April were our end-of-year exams. For two weeks, the entire school endured an endless torture. Students would collapse during dinner and become walking zombies. More than once students had to go to the hospital wing to receive a Relaxing Potion from Madam Pomfrey.

The fifth and seventh years had the worst time of it, as they had to study for O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s: two exams that would decide their future careers.

During those two weeks, Lily was a mess. She would carry a book to study everywhere she went. I would wake up in the middle of the night to find her looking up some definition of an herb. She barely ate or slept, but just studied all the time. Everyone knew that she would probably end up top on our year, but whenever someone would point that out to her she snapped, so we just decided to keep our mouths shut.

I was probably the only one who knew her real motive for her madness. She was a Muggle-born, and she wanted to prove to everyone that she was just as good as the pureblood. She just failed to realize that most people didn't care the type of blood that flowed through her veins. With the exception of the Slytherins, everyone admired Lily Evans for being such an intelligent and confident witch. She was the girl that everyone, including the older girls, wanted to be. But Lily was always too humble to believe these words.

"Oh, my God, Be. I'm so nervous," Lily said, her lip trembling.

Today was the day we were to receive our scores. We were with our Head of House, Professor McGonagall, who was staring at us with a stack of papers in her hand.

I looked around the room. Sirius was balancing his chair on two legs, his face clearly nonchalant. James, sitting next to him, was messing up his hair absentmindedly while

sporting his famous smirk. Remus was looking more tired than usual, but on his face were traces of nervousness. Peter was shaking from head to foot, and it was clearly taking all his effort to not cry. Frank and Alice were sitting side by side, as they always were, each of them looking slightly preoccupied. Gideon and Fabian were at ease, playing tic-tac-toe on a piece of parchment.

"Relax, Lils," I whispered. "Everything is going to be fine. You'll see." She nodded.

"Well, everyone, I have your exam scores. Let me just say that I could not be more proud of you. All of you have passed with flying colors. Most of you are within the top twenty of your class. Lily Evans," McGonagall announced, "is top of the class overall."

"Oh my God, Lily! Congratulations!" I shouted, hugging her tight. Lily seemed to be in a trance. She didn't acknowledge my hug, but stared at McGonagall, hardly daring to believe her.

"Are you serious?" she whispered.

"Nope," Remus called. "He is." Everyone pointed at Sirius.

"You all need to make better jokes," Sirius said sullenly.

Everyone started laughing, including Professor McGonagall.

"Congratulations to you all."

The end-of-year feast that night was quite the celebration. We entered the Great Hall to find everything decorated with the red and gold colors of Gryffindor. We had won the House Cup for the first time in five years.

When Dumbledore stood up to make his final announcements, everything went dead silent.

"Another year gone, and I know I speak for all the staff when I say that we can't be prouder of all of you. To our upperclassmen, we have watched you progress through the years, each time becoming better witches and wizards. To our first years, your journey is just beginning, but we can already see all of your qualities. It is sad to see the seventh years go, but we know that if the wizarding world is filled with people like you, we can dare to dream of a better tomorrow. To the rest, we'll await you next year to fill your heads with more learning and to be even prouder of your accomplishments.

"It has been a close race this year, but I am happy to say that the House Cup goes to Gryffindor with 534 points."

The Hall erupted into cheers, mainly from the Gryffindor table. But even Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw were applauding as well because they had been so tired of seeing Slytherin win.

As I was hugging Lily, I noticed James, Sirius, Remus, and Peter bent close and whispering together. Then, they all discreetly pointed their wands at the Slytherins. All of a sudden, all the Slytherins started cheering and yelling too, saying things like "Go Gryffindors!" and "Gryffindor rocks!"

All the other houses collapsed in laughter, and the Slytherins looked mortified at such a thing coming out of their mouths.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Gryffindor first-years gathered around the barrier that would lead them back to Kings Cross Station.

"Well, it's been a great year, guys," Gideon said.

"It was great meeting you and Lily," Fabian said, giving us both a hug.

"Great meeting you too," I said.

"Definitely," Lily added.

Alice came and hugged us both at the same time. "You better send me letters over the summer, both of you. I want to hear from my best friends."

"Deal," Lily said, giggling.

I stared at James, Sirius, Remus, and Peter.

"Well a bigger bunch of troublemakers I have never met in my life," I said.

"But you love us anyways," Sirius said.

"And you can't wait to see us next year," Remus added.

"Unfortunately, it is true," I said, smiling.

The four boys enveloped me in a group hug.

I looked at Lily and nudged her softly.

"Well, have a good summer," she said to her feet.

"You too, Lily," Sirius said.

"Good bye, Remus. Thanks for the help in Defense," Lily said.

"No problem," he said good-naturedly.

"Thanks for helping me, Lily," Peter piped up.

"It was a pleasure, Peter. Don't hesitate to ask if you need help again," Lily said, smiling.

She stared at James for a long time. "See you, Potter."

Without waiting for a response, she turned and walked through the barrier.

"Goodbye, Evans!" James whispered. "God, she's beautiful."

"Well!" Fabian said lightly.

"Good luck with that one, mate," Sirius said before he too disappeared into the barrier.

"Have fun," I called to everyone, winking. "I can't wait until next year."

## Second Year

### *Chapter 3 of 3*

Beatriz continues her magical schooling, facing new encounters along the way.

Second Year

I breathed in deep to take in the air around me.

"Ah," I sighed. "I am beginning to feel the magic flow between my veins again." I twirled around in the same spot, extending my arms in the air towards the sky.

"You are so dramatic, Be," Lily said. "But it sure feels good to be back."

"Yep. I kind of missed this place," Alice said, staring at the castle fondly.

"Come on, girls," I said. I linked arms with Lily and Alice and we proceeded to walk into the Entrance Hall, laughing and giggling along the way.

As soon as we entered the Great Hall, friends from other houses started greeting us. More than once we stopped to chat with people such as Amelia Bones, Amos Diggory, and Emmeline Vance.

"Quite the social butterflies, our girls have become," Fabian commented as we finally sat at the Gryffindor table.

"Excuse us for being social," Lily said, smiling all the same.

"Girls, we'd like you to meet Kingsley and Caradoc," Gideon said, pointing to the two guys sitting next to him. I immediately recognized them as the beaters for the Gryffindor team.

"Hey," Both groups said at the same time.

"The infamous Beatriz, Alice, and Lily," Kingsley said, in a deep slow voice. "We've heard quite a lot about you from the Marauders."

"The Marauders?" Lily asked curiously.

"James, Sirius, Remus, and Peter," Caradoc answered. "We've christened their little group The Marauders since they like to cause so much mayhem."

"Nice," I said, smiling. Lily, on the other hand, frowned.

"Don't mind her. Her and James don't mix," Alice said. "Oh, look, here comes Frank."

"Hey, guys," Frank said, sliding into a seat next to Alice and smiling broadly.

"Hey, Frank, how was your summer?" Gideon asked.

Before Frank could answer, however, Professor McGonagall walked in with all the first years. They were so small, and each of them looked absolutely terrified.

None of us had ever appreciated just how boring the Sorting Ceremony was. It just went on and on, and it seemed that the long list would never end. By the time the last kid became a Ravenclaw, it was possible to hear all our stomachs grumbling hungrily.

Dumbledore stood up, his blue eyes twinkling and his arms extended wide. "Welcome back everyone to another year at Hogwarts. I know you are all anxious to dig into our delicious feast so I will not deprive you of it any longer. Dig in!"

"Hear, hear!" The Gryffindors shouted in unison.

The Hall laughed appreciatively.

"Finally!" Lily exclaimed, digging into the vegetables.

"Nice, Lils. I love your manners," Alice said.

"What? I'm hungry!" she said defensively.

I rolled my eyes at my best friend. "I can't wait until the Quidditch season starts again!" I said excitedly.

"Yeah. It's going to be great!" Kingsley agreed. "Two of our Chasers and our Keeper left last year, but James and Remus are going to try out, so we've got it covered."

Lily choked on her food. "James... Chaser?"

"He's amazing, Lils," Alice said. "Just wait till you see him fly in a Quidditch game."

"Great. His ego is just going to get bigger," Lily muttered.

"What about the Keeper? Any idea who you might pick?" Frank asked.

"Black," Caradoc said promptly.

"As in Sirius Black?" I asked.

"The one and only. He is awesome as well," Fabian said.

"How is it that we can always manage to bring those four into any conversation that we have?" Lily asked irritably.

"Well, because they're good at everything they do. Just like you're good at everything you do," Gideon said.

"Whatever."

The rest of the night passed in a bunch of jokes, laughter, giggles, and speeches. By the end, Alice, Lily, and I were very grateful to get into our familiar warm beds for a comfortable night's sleep.

"JAMES POTTER!" shouted Lily across the Charms classroom. "STOP IT THIS INSTANT!"

"Stop doing what, Lily flower?" James asked innocently.

"You know perfectly well what you're doing, you git!"

James had spent the last half hour charming paper balls to fly around Lily's head.

"Miss Evans, is something wrong?" Professor Flitwick asked.

"As a matter of fact, Professor, something is wrong! Potter won't stop charming paper balls to fly around my head!"

"Now, James, kindly start acting your age. I'd hate to have to give you a detention on your first day of term."

"I'm sorry, Professor. I just wanted to practice my Levitation Charm."

"Ah. Okay then."

Lily turned around and glared at James, who smiled sweetly and blew her a kiss.

"James is going to get it one day," Sirius whispered at me.

"Tell me about it. I can almost see the day when they get married," I said.

"Them? I doubt it." Sirius said.

"Who could you see getting married?"

"Hmm... Frank and Alice."

"Are you serious?!?" I said, laughing.

"Definitely. I can sense these things."

"We're 12 years old. You can't sense a thing. The chances of Alice and Frank getting married are like... I don't know... you and I getting married. Slim to none."

"You never know. It could be our destiny."

"Sirius Black, once again, you're 12 years old, in Charms class, talking about destiny," I said. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. You'll see what I'm talking about one day. If you believe in destiny that is."

"Well, I stick by Lily and James."

"Want to bet on it?"

"Ten Galleons on their wedding day," I said.

"Bet on what?" Alice asked, sliding across the table.

"Nothing," Sirius and I said together, smirking.

"Well, then come on, Be. It's time for lunch," Alice said, taking my arm.

I allowed myself to be driven away, but not before I gave Sirius one last glance. His trademark smirk appeared across his face and he winked knowingly. I couldn't help but smile.

For the rest of the week, James continued to hex paper balls to fly around Lily's and the Slytherin's heads. By Friday, half the school population wanted to curse him senseless, but only Lily had the guts to cast him a well-deserved Leg Locker Curse.

"Lily, this is not fair!" James moaned. "I have Quidditch trials tonight!"

"Should've thought about that before turning my life into a living nightmare!" Lily said, giving him a look of deepest loathing before stalking off to the library.

"Be, please!" James pleaded. I couldn't help myself. He looked as if he was about to cry.

"If Lily finds out, I kill you," I warned, before muttering the counter curse.

"Oh, my God, thank you!" he said, giving me a hug. "Come! You should see our tryouts."

"Oh, James, I would, but I want to have a nice surprise for the first Quidditch game of the season. So knock them dead for me, okay?"

"Okay, deal."

"My best to Sirius and Remus!" I called after him.

Two and a half hours later, I was finishing my Charms essay with Lily and Alice. All of a sudden, an entourage of people bursting through the portrait hole disturbed the quiet of the common room.

"Oh, my God, Be!" Fabian said, rushing to us. "They were bloody brilliant! James and Remus made every single goal! It was like 30 between the both of them!"

"Really?" I said.

"Yeah! It was wicked!" Gideon exclaimed.

I looked at the girls. Alice smiled broadly and Lily looked sullen.

"We're never going to hear the end of this."

"And Sirius!" Gideon continued. "He blocked every single one of Minnie's best shots! Minnie is the current Gryffindor Chaser by the way."

The three boys rushed towards us. In a matter of seconds I was tangled in a many-armed hug.

"Congratulations, guys!" I said, barely able to breathe.

"Thanks, Be!"

As everything settled down, I turned to Lily and smiled. "Aww come on, Lils. You can't be mad at them forever."

"Watch me," she muttered, throwing them one final look of disgust before returning to finish her essay.

\*\*\*\*\*

Midway through October, Alice joined us at breakfast looking very dejected. Before I could ask, she said, "Did you hear what came out in the *Prophet*?"

"No, I haven't seen the newspaper," Lily answered.

I didn't even bother answering, as everyone knew that I didn't read the paper.

"There have been a number of disappearances. The Ministry has been trying to find a link between these seemingly random people. There was only one: they were all Muggle-born. Everyone is thinking the same thing but no one says it: You-Know-Who."

Lily and I both gasped in unison.

"That's horrible!" Lily exclaimed.

I could barely trust myself to speak. I was just stunned. It seemed so impossible that anyone could possibly agree with that guy.

"But, Alice, I thought you said that no one could possibly join him because most wizards are half-bloods or less," Lily whispered.

"It's true. At the time, no one thought that anyone would join him. But there are some pureblood families that are full of it. And some people want to be with him because they want power."

As I looked around me, everyone seemed to be whispering in little groups about the disappearances. The expressions on people's faces were scared and worried. There was only one group of people that seemed excited about the situation: the Slytherins.

"Those assholes," I said spitefully. "They really are evil."

"Now's when you noticed?" Sirius said, popping out of nowhere with the rest of the Marauders.

"No, I always knew. I just didn't care to admit it for Lily's sake," I said.

"You can't say that, Be," Lily said reasonably. "They obviously aren't behind any of these disappearances. You don't know what side they're on."

"Have you seen the looks on all their faces, Lily?" Sirius said, motioning to the Slytherin table. "I can bet that their parents probably made those people disappear. Trust me, the Slytherins aren't your common bully. I live with people that were Slytherins. I see the injustice and the way these people think. They are evil, Lily. They will stop at nothing until they get what they want."

Lily, Alice, and I stared at him. No one had ever seen Sirius so... serious. Nevertheless it was admiring to see him talk with such determination and passion. Even Lily didn't throw him her usual death glare.

"I think we should go to class," Lily said quietly.

She stood up and walked past Sirius without another glance.

I gave the Marauder a small smile before I ran after her. She was halfway down the corridor by the time I caught up with her.

"This is so awful," Lily whimpered.

"Don't worry, Lily. Look, the Ministry is trying to find these people as fast as possible. They can't hide forever. Once they catch these people it will all be over. Just watch."

"You think so?" Lily asked hopefully.

"I know so."

The truth was that I was in fact just as scared as Lily was. But she was my best friend, and she needed me to be strong in her time of need.

That afternoon, I was sitting under the beech tree by the lake reading a copy of *Quidditch Through The Ages*. Lily and Alice were upstairs practicing for Charms, and I was quite content to be able to spend some time alone.

I stared off into the blood red sunset, somehow feeling this knot in the pit of my stomach giving me a warning.

"Are you alright?" A voice asked from behind me.

I turned around to see Sirius leaning against the tree casually, looking concerned.

"I'm... fine," I ended lamely.

"Sorry about what I said this morning," he said, sitting down

next to me. "I didn't realize how harsh I was sounding."

"No, don't worry about it. It's the truth."



"It is. I just didn't want you and Lily to be walking around, completely ignorant of it all. Not just you, everyone. The only reason I'm so informed is because of my family."

I stared at him curiously. "Your family agrees with all this stuff?"

"Of course they do. The Blacks are an ancient pureblood wizarding family. My parents are convinced that to be Black makes you practically royal. They hate me for being in Gryffindor. Thousands of Black generations have been in Slytherin, and I'm the first to be put in Gryffindor. As soon as they heard, they as good as disowned me."

"Sirius, that's terrible."

Sirius shrugged, trying to be nonchalant. "The only two people I care about in my family are my cousin Andromeda and my brother Regulus."

"I didn't know you had a brother! He's younger I suppose."

"How'd you know?"

"You sounded protective of him when you said his name."

Sirius stared at the sunset, smiling. "Yes. I'd hate for my parents to brainwash him. We've been close all our lives. He really looks up to me. I hope I can manage to change his mind about my parents' ideas. He's coming next year. He'll be in Gryffindor hopefully."

"If he's anything like you, I'm sure he will be." I paused, not knowing whether I should go on or not. "I'm sorry about your family, Sirius."

"Don't be," Sirius said, his eyes becoming dark as he spoke. "As far as I'm concerned, those people are not my family. The only family I have are James, Remus, and Peter. I never wanted to be a Black."

I stared at the ground, not quite sure of what to say next. After a couple of minutes of silence, Sirius stood up. "Well, I'd better go. I have to meet the guys somewhere. If you ever need to talk, you know where to find me. I know you have Lily but... I know you like to be strong for her. You can't bottle your emotions up."

I stared at him, amazed, and before I could even answer, he turned and walked away.

I couldn't help but smile as I turned back to look at the disappearing sunset. Sirius Black was quite a character.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first Quidditch match of the season was highly anticipated. Everyone was longing to see the new Gryffindor Chasers and Keeper who were rumored to be the best Quidditch players Hogwarts had seen in awhile.

On the morning before the match, the air was so thick in the Great Hall, it could be cut with a knife. One side of the Hall was dressed in red and gold, while the opposite end was covered in green and silver.

Alice, Lily, Frank, Gideon, Fabian, and I were sitting next to the Gryffindor Quidditch team. James was shaking nervously, barely able to eat without dropping his food from the fork. Remus was a delicate shade of green and he was not even bothering to eat. Sirius, however, was quite at his ease, merely enjoying the attention he was receiving from all the Gryffindors. How he managed to keep his cool even in the most stressful situations was beyond me.

"Remus, you need to eat," I said, buttering some toast for him. "You need the energy."

"Thanks, Be," He said, smiling as he took a bite out of the bread.

"You're going to be awesome! I saw you fly at practice yesterday. I think you're even better than James," I whispered in his ear. The delicate shade of green turned into a brilliant red.

"Thanks," he whispered. After that he became slightly more cheerful.

"Sirius, aren't you the least bit nervous about the match?" James asked his best friend.

"I'm more excited than worried. The Slytherins are a bunch of thick dunderheads. It's going to take more than Malfoy to stop me from blocking their shots," Sirius said, his eyes glinting mischievously.

"Come on, guys," Derek, captain of the team, called down the table. "Let's go change."

The Gryffindor team made their way out of the hall to tumultuous applause.

Soon after they had left, the rest of the Gryffindor second years also made their way to the pitch.

The atmosphere was intense as each side of the field cheered on their own team. As soon as James and Remus were on their brooms, it was evident that all their worries disappeared. They flew across the fields, looking as light as the wind. Sirius, meanwhile, was waving and throwing kisses to everyone from the goalpost.

"They are so arrogant," Lily shouted, trying to make herself heard above the noise.

"Oh, cheer up, Lils. It's Quidditch! You're supposed to be arrogant on the pitch," Alice shouted back.

"Yeah sure."

"And the Gryffindor team is looking good on this fine day," Bagman could be heard above the cheers. "Expectations are very high for the team this year..." The rest of his commentaries were drowned by hisses from the Slytherin end.

"The line up this year is Minnie Randolph, Remus Lupin, and James Potter as Chasers, Caradoc Dearborn and Kingsley Shacklebolt as Beaters, Sirius Black as Keeper..." Bagman was drowned out by shrieks from girls. I rolled my eyes as Sirius bowed from his posts. "And... Derek Carmichael as Seeker!"

The Gryffindors cheered for their team while the Slytherins tried to make their hisses heard over the applause.

The Chasers lined themselves up in front of each other with Madam Hooch and the Quaffle between them. Madam Hooch blew the whistle and threw the Quaffle in the air to be caught by James immediately.

"And James Potter catches the Quaffle and passes it on to Remus Lupin, who soars toward the goal posts, and he shoots...and he SCORES! Gryffindor is in the lead 10-0!"

Remus soared away from the goalposts with a triumphant look on his face. The Slytherins were looking murderous. Their Chaser raced with the Quaffle to the goalposts and...

"Shacklebolt blocks the Chaser with a Bludger. That has got to hurt. Randolph takes possession of the Quaffle. She passes to Lupin who passes to Potter who passes back

to Randolph and it's Randolph, Potter, Lupin, Potter, Lupin, oh watch out for the Bludger, Potter, Randolph and SHE SCORES! 20-0 Gryffindor!"

We all cheered hysterically as Minnie flew away, high-fiving James along the way.

The Slytherins took possession of the Quaffle. Malfoy made his way towards Sirius and he shot the Quaffle. Sirius, however, was too quick for him, so he was able to block the shot and get the Quaffle to James.

Soon enough, James and Remus managed to score 50 points apiece, widening the lead to 120-10. The Slytherins started relying on their dirty tactics to try to salvage the game. They would accidentally knock into the players, and the Beater even hit Minnie across the head with a bat, claiming that he thought she was a Bludger.

"Lupin passes the Quaffle to Potter...The Seekers fly after the Snitch, each trying in vain to knock the other off course! And... YES! Derek has caught the Snitch! GRYFFINDOR WINS!"

We all cheered and rushed down to the field to congratulate our friends.

"You guys were brilliant!" I said, as all three boys hugged me at once.

"Thanks, Be."

"Of course. Since when have the Marauders been bad at anything?" Fabian said admiringly. "But nice Quidditch game."

"Thanks, Fab," James said. Then he turned around and shouted, "PARTY IN THE COMMON ROOM!"

"Come on, guys," Sirius said. "Let's go get some food."

\*\*\*\*\*

With the newfound success of the Gryffindor Quidditch Team, the Marauders became more popular than ever. People would gather around in the common room, in the halls, in classes, and just about anywhere to hear some of their stories. The only person that didn't seem to be too happy about them (apart from the Slytherins) was Lily.

"I can't believe them!" Lily whispered furiously in the library. "They prance around the school as if they own the place. All they do is play pranks and hex people, and they seem to get away with it. They may lose a million house points in the process, but no one cares because it was precious Potter and his faithful sidekicks, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and Peter Pettigrew."

I stared intently at my book. I truly believed my voice would soon vanish from lack of use. Lily had been like this for days. It was her obsession. And I couldn't bring myself to agree with what she said, because in truth I liked the Marauders. I thought that they were extremely funny, very loyal, and the best friends anyone could ask for. But I knew better than to say that to Lily.

"Did you see them today? They hexed a Slytherin fourth year to oblivion just because the kid crossed their path in the hall. That's bloody ridiculous!" Lily continued whispering.

Madam Pince gave us a severe look as she walked past us.

"What do you care Lily? What's it to you anyways?" I asked. The words were out of my mouth before I could even consider what I was about to say.

"What's it to me?" Lily asked, glaring at me. "It's wrong!"

"The Slytherins are just as bad. This fifth year hexed a first year last week for not carrying his books to class. What the hell is that?"

"So just because they do it means that we have to sink to their level?"

"No, but we can't let them step all over everyone either," I said.

"You know, sometimes I think you're just like them."

"Like the Slytherins?" I asked disbelievingly.

"No. Like the Marauders. I expect if you weren't friends with me, you'd be part of their group."

I bit my lip, weighing my words carefully.

"I like them Lily. I think they're good people. They just like to have their fun, and their definition of fun is different from your definition of fun. But if the people that have known them the longest still say they're good people, then they are good people."

Lily shrugged and continued working on her essay. I sighed, quite sure that after this conversation my voice would surely vanish.

\*\*\*\*\*

"I'm afraid I have some terrible news." Professor Dumbledore's voice rang across the silent Hall on the first night back from Winter Break. Everyone already knew what the terrible news was, but Dumbledore announcing it made it irreversible and painfully true.

"One of our own has been taken from our midst. Emily Peterson, Ravenclaw sixth year was murdered along with the rest of her family by Voldemort and his Death Eaters."

A shudder ran through the Hall. I stared, dumbfounded, from Lily to Alice to Sirius to James to Remus to Gideon to Fabian to Frank and to Peter. All of them wore the same look of utter disbelief, fear, and in Sirius' case, anger.

"Emily was a great asset to our school, and I'm sure that all of us will miss her terribly. May I remind you that the times are getting darker? And in these dark times, we must all unite, regardless of our backgrounds or our house. Unless we stand together, we will all perish from within."

He sat back down on the staff table, all twinkle in his eyes gone.

I stared in disbelief around me. I felt like crying for some reason. The grief just clawed at the pit of my stomach. I felt like I was going to throw up my food. I didn't know Emily. But I knew she was a Muggle-born. I knew she was 16 years old, with her whole life ahead of her. A life that would never be lived.

"Are you alright?" Remus asked cautiously, as the group was making its way to Gryffindor tower. "You look a little pale."

"I'm... in shock," I said, staring at the ground. "Everything is different once someone so close is taken. She was a Muggle-born, Remus. That could have just as easily been Lily... or me!"

Remus stopped walking and pulled me into a hug. We stood there for a while, neither one of us speaking. Words were not necessary at this point.

"I wish I could tell you this will all go away," Remus whispered into my hair. "I wish I could tell you that we are all going to wake up from this horrible dream."

"I want to fight against Voldemort when I get out of here. This is my world, and I'm not going to let it fall apart without putting up a fight."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Did you see that game? It was bloody brilliant!" James exclaimed, bouncing on the balls of his feet.

"Yes, James, we were all there. We saw the game," Fabian said, clearly mocking him.

"That pass Remus made to Minnie was beautiful!" Alice commented.

Everyone murmured their agreement.

The Gryffindors had just won the Quidditch Cup. The entire school agreed that it was the best Quidditch game in at least 20 years. The Chasers scored a grand total of 300 points. Remus was on fire that day. He seemed to do no wrong. He made brilliant passes, incredible goals, and the Bludgers just seemed to miss him. He had been the hero of the game. Of course now the Slytherins were after his blood, but then again when were they not?

"Hey, Be! You want anything to eat?" Sirius called from the table with all the food.

"No thanks. I'm pretty much stuffed," I called back.

I settled into the comfort of the couch. "Ugh. I can't believe we have exams tomorrow."

"Speaking of exams, where's Evans?" James asked, looking around the room hopefully.

"Let's take a wild guess," Alice said sarcastically.

"Studying," I said. "She's been in a right state these past few months. She's been studying, complaining about you people, and worrying about the war."

"She needs to have a bit of fun," Sirius said, joining the group.

"You know how Lily is. She's so stubborn. We try to make her think reasonably, but it's impossible. She's brilliant, but she has this temper that someone needs to control," Alice said.

"She'll come around," I said confidently.

For two long weeks after that night, we were being drilled as we did our end of year exams. The exams I thought to be quite easy, although not everyone was sharing my sentiment. Poor Peter would come out of every exam shaking terribly in a state of utter distress. I even offered to help him study, which he accepted graciously. In the end, it came as a great relief to everyone involved that the summer holidays were just around the corner.

"Bye, Lils. I'll miss you!" I said, giving Lily a hug. "Listen, try to relax a bit. You seem to be awfully stressed. There's no use crying over spilled milk. Whatever happens, happens. There's no use stressing about the inevitable, okay?"

"You're right. I'm sorry about being so annoying. Take care of yourself, okay?" she said. Her green eyes stared into mine worriedly.

"I'd hate to lose my best friend," she added.

I smiled broadly and gave her another hug. "I love you, Lils. See you in September."