

Homecoming

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One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N I want to thank my wonderful betas for their help. I realize that this may be considered OOC for Petunia, but I believe that she has changed since Harry left, and this is how I see her now. I hope you enjoy it!

"Are you sure that you want to do this, Harry?" Ginny asked, taking his hand and turning him to look at her. "After the way they treated you while you were growing up..."

"I need to do this, Ginny. I felt like things were left unfinished between Aunt Petunia and me. I just want to go back and let them know that everything went fine and that it's over."

"Do you want me to go with you?" she offered, knowing how difficult this was going to be for him.

After thinking for a moment, he shook his head. "No, this is something I have to do on my own." He leaned in and gave her a kiss. "I love you, Ginny."

"I love you too, Harry." Ginny watched as Harry Disapparated away and smiled. She was so proud of him. It took a lot of guts to do what he was going to do.

Harry stood outside the door to his Aunt Marge's house, where his aunt and uncle had been living for the past year. He cringed when he remembered his last encounter with Aunt Marge in his third year at Hogwarts – how he had blown her up and was afraid that he would be expelled for it.

In some ways, this frightened him more than the fight with Voldemort had. When he'd fought Voldemort, it was something he'd known he had to do. He had to save the wizarding world and get rid of the evil. Besides, he'd known that he had his friends there to back him up. This was something he was facing alone.

Finally summoning up his courage, he knocked on the door and held his breath while the door opened.

Petunia stood there for a moment, her face registering a mixture of relief and surprise. "Harry, please... come in."

"Hello, Aunt Petunia," he said, offering her a small smile.

She led him to the sitting room and sat across from him, studying him thoughtfully.

"I wanted to come back and tell you what happened," he said, looking around. "Where is everyone else?"

"Marge, Vernon and Dudley went shopping. They should be returning within the hour." Petunia looked down at her hands in her lap, then looked back up at him. "Harry, I know that when you were growing up I didn't treat you very well."

"Aunt Petunia, I didn't come here for —" Harry started, but she held up her hand to tell him to wait.

Standing up, she came over to sit beside him on the couch. "I just hope that you can forgive me for everything that I did. When I read that letter from Dumbledore, saying that your mother and father had died, it broke my heart. I didn't know your father well, but when we were growing up, your mother and I were very close." She took his hand and looked into his eyes. "Your mother told me about the prophecy, that you may have to be the one that defeated Voldemort. When she died, you were my only link to her. I didn't want to lose you too. That's why we tried so desperately to stop you from going to Hogwarts." She looked at him and sighed. "I want you to know that I have been thinking about you, wondering how you are." She put her arm around his shoulders, and as he looked at her, he could see tears in her eyes. "I am very glad that you are safe."

Harry smiled. "Thank you, Aunt Petunia."

She took a handkerchief out of her pocket and dabbed at the corners of her eyes. "You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to, but how did the battle go?"

Harry took a deep breath. "We lost a few of our friends. That night when I left your house, we were attacked and I lost my beautiful owl. Auror Moody also was killed."

She thought for a moment. "I don't remember that name."

"Well, one year he, Tonks and Remus talked to you briefly along with Arthur Weasley. Auror Moody walked with a limp, Remus had graying hair, and Arthur Weasley had red hair. Tonks and Remus also died in the battle." Harry could hear his voice cracking when he talked of those who had died. He went on to talk about who else had died, and when he got to Snape, he heard his aunt draw in her breath.

"Snape? Severus Snape?" Petunia asked, a lump rising in her throat.

"Yes. Do you remember him?"

"I do. I remember that day I saw him with Lily..."

Before she could finish, the door opened and Marge, Vernon, and Dudley came in.

"What are you doing here?" Marge asked, glaring at Harry.

Standing up, Petunia put her hands on her hips and glared at her sister-in-law. "Now see here, Marge. Harry is my nephew and I am very proud of him. My sister and her husband did not die in a crash. They died protecting Harry."

Marge's face turned a dark shade of purple. "How dare you speak to me that way!"

"It's what I should have done years ago. I'm just sorry it took me this long to see it." Petunia looked at Vernon, daring him to say something against her.

Opening and closing his mouth several times, Vernon looked very much like a puffer fish. Finally, he said, "Harry, your aunt and I did a lot of talking while you were gone."

Harry's mouth nearly fell open. This was the first time that his uncle had called him something other than "boy."

"Thank you for protecting us and making sure that we were safe." Vernon's voice held no hint of sarcasm.

After a few moments of silence, Dudley walked over to Harry and held out his hand. "Harry, I hope that we can put our differences behind us and start anew."

Harry thought for a moment and smirked. "One thing that this past year has taught me is that nothing is what it seems and that people need to be given a second chance." He took his hand and shook it.

With a huff, Marge left the room, leaving the four of them alone.

"I'll be right back, Harry," Petunia said, leaving the room. A few minutes later, she returned with an envelope. "Harry, I want you to have this. This is the letter that was left with you that morning that we found you on our doorstep."

Harry opened the letter and read it.

Dear Petunia,

I am afraid that I am the bearer of bad news. Your sister, Lily, and her husband, James, were killed on Halloween night by Lord Voldemort. Lily sacrificed her life for her son, and that is what saved his life. I am placing him in your care because the same blood that runs through your veins ran through your sister's and will protect him.

Please take care of him and raise him as your own. When he is eleven, he will be attending Hogwarts, and as long as he returns to your home each summer, he will be kept safe by his mother's love.

I am protecting your household as well, and this protection will stay as long as Harry keeps this as his home until he comes of age.

Harry will have a terrible burden to bear, but I trust that you will love him and care for him.

Sincerely,

Albus Dumbledore

Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Harry's eyes filled with tears as he finished reading the letter. Petunia went over to her nephew and put her arms around him.

"Welcome home, Harry."

For once since the age of eleven, Harry didn't feel as if Hogwarts was his only home.

Prompt 8. Harry goes to see his aunt and uncle after Voldemort is defeated. How does it go? What does he say? What do they say?