Harry Potter and the Knight of St George

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Chapter: 1

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter or anything related to or a part of it; I merely have an imagination and an idea for a story that I must get out of my head.

Author’s notes: I am taking a few creative liberties with some things that I have not found to be specified in the books (i.e. Bill’s age). The character of Sean O’Sullivan and the concept of the Order of St. George are (as far as I know) my creations. This story takes place after “Harry Potter And The Half Blood Prince” and contains spoilers.

Harry Potter and The Knight of St. George  Chapter 1: Old Friends

The young twenty-six year old man stood in the King’s Cross Station awaiting the arrival of the number 675 train at platform number 17. This was the first time in his life that he had come to this station to meet a Muggle coming on a Muggle transport, and it felt odd to him. He was dressed in his usual Muggle style clothing but still stood out due to his scarred, but well healed, face. He glanced back down at the edition of The Daily Prophet that he held in his hands, the Prophet was still honoring the late Albus Dumbledore even though it had been several days after his demise at the hands of Severus Snape.

“The dog” the man muttered under his breath, “after all that Albus did for him he repays him by stabbing him in the back and murdering him...typical Death Eater.”

He was removed from his thoughts when he heard the whistle sounding the arrival of the 675 and looked up to find the train pulling in. He put away his paper and waited for the passengers to get off the train. He wondered if he would recognize him, and how he would take the news of the reason why he had been summoned.

He looked and soon saw a figure twenty-one years of age, standing five feet ten inches high, with his dark blonde hair in a crew cut about half an inch high. He was dressed in a simple hooded monastic cloak and carried a duffel bag gripped by the strap and held over his right shoulder against his back. The only other notable feature was a metal crucifix worn around his neck. The crucifix was made of iron, and was ¾ inch thick with the vertical beam four inches long and the horizontal beam three inches long. The middles of the beams had thin blood red colored beams along the centers that rose about half an inch from the iron ones with a prominent peak in the center.

“Sean!” The man called out.

“Bill Weasley,” the other remarked coolly in a confident monotone voice with a thick Irish accent.

The two men stopped and stared at each other for a few moments and then Bill spoke.

“You’ve gotten bigger,” he said referring to the muscular structure of the young man in front of him.

“It has been about four years since we’ve seen each other” Sean said.

“Too long my friend” Bill answered.

“Indeed” Sean answered simply.

The two of them looked each other over for a few moments before Bill next spoke.

“You must be tired,” Bill said to his friend, “and wondering why I called you here,” he continued. “Come with me, I’ll buy you dinner and we can discuss why I asked you here.”

“I’ll pay the bill,” Sean said, “You look like you’ve been though a lot.” Sean said after looking at the many scars and slashes Bill had on his face and any other part of his body that was visible through his clothes.
“I was a lot worse before the Knights at Dumbledore’s funeral gave me the purification water.”

They sat down at an outdoor table of a nearby restaurant, Bill ordered a steak, cooked extra rare, and Sean ordered one well done. Bill ordered a Sangria to drink and Sean ordered milk.

“So,” Sean said to Bill, who was biting down a square of his rare-cooked steak, “you called me all the way here from Romania with an urgent message requiring my immediate attention and response just to have a steak dinner with an old mic friend?”

“You’re right,” said Bill. “I owe you an explanation. You know about the struggle that is going on right now with He Who Must Not Be Named?” Bill continued.

“Aye,” Sean responded, “the Dark Lord who is trying to regain power over the Wizard world?”

“Right,” Bill answered. “I have come in possession of this message sent by the Dark Lord, it contains details about a plan to form an alliance with several different creatures in an attempt to overthrow those who oppose him and then impose his authority over the world…the entire world…including the Muggles.”

“But, if you have the note than that means he knows you have it and will be canceling his plans.” Sean responded, still with that air of seemingly unshakeable monotone confidence.

“You’re perceptive skills never cease to amaze me O’Sullivan.” Bill responded. “But, we did think of that, we caught the owl delivering the note without killing it, copied the message, and then sent the owl on its way. You Know Who will proceed as intended with his plan, but we need to act as though we don’t know…the only ones who know about this are myself and the other members of the Order of the Phoenix.”

“The Order of the Phoenix?” Sean asked Bill, looking for an explanation.

“It’s a group of Wizards who are against the Dark Lord. We operate independently of the Ministry of Magic and move against him in any way we can.” Bill responded. “Much like you and the Order of Saint George,” Bill added.

“So,” Sean began, “what does all this have to do with me?”

“Have you heard of a boy named Harry Potter?” Bill asked Sean.

“No, should I have?” Sean asked.

“I don’t think so,” Bill responded, “the boy is very well known in my world, but not to the Muggles.”

Bill then proceeded to tell Sean everything he knew about Harry Potter. He told him about the beginning and Voldemort marking Harry as his equal when he killed his parents, about the adventures that Harry had with his little brother and their friend Hermione, about his godfather Sirius and his death at the hands of Bellatrix Lestrange, he told Sean about the death of Dumbledore, Harry’s defeat at the hands of Severus Snape and Harry’s resolve to obtain the Horcruxes and fulfill the prophecy to be the one to destroy Voldemort.

Sean listened intently and carefully and when Bill stopped to take a sip of his Sangria, Sean asked him in his usual monoton Irish accented voice, “But what does all this have to do with me?”

“Sean,” Bill began, “These are very uncertain times, we don’t know who we can trust, and no one knows who is with You Know Who and who is against him.” Bill paused realizing the full plight of the situation, “I would have you read the message” Bill said indicating the confiscated parchment with Voldemort’s message, “but to save time and get to the point, I will just
Sean couldn’t help but notice that Bill’s tone reflected a large amount of bitterness each time he mentioned Snape. “It says for him to take Bellatrix and find Harry Potter, and bring him to the Dark Lord. He further says that he intends to kill Potter in front of his enemies in order to crush their morale.” Bill paused and looked at Sean, Sean could tell that Bill was trying to think of how to word his next statement.

“I am to be some sort of protector then?” Sean asked.

“If you would.” Bill answered. “I know that I can trust you, because you are an honorable Knight of the Order of St. George, and that You Know Who wouldn’t think of looking for Potter amongst you and the others.”

“Plus,” Bill continued. “He Who Must Not Be Named has expressed his desire to enlist the Vampires along with the werewolves, Dementors, and Inferi in his cause. And you are the best Vampire hunter in over a century, your tracking skills are second to none, and you possess amazing fighting skills…your strength in body and mind would make even a wizard quake in horror before you. Harry needs new skills if he is to prevail, he needs to go with you to the monastery and learn from you.”

Bill paused at the end of this to try and see any sort of reaction in Sean’s Prussian-Blue eyes. Sean took another drink from his glass, and paused comprehending all that had been said and trying to picture in his mind what he was being asked to do. “It has taken me sixteen years to get where I am,” Sean began, “how much time will I have to prepare the boy?”

“Voldemort will strike when the next term at Hogwarts begins…so Harry needs to be ready in about three months.”

“You are a great friend Bill Weasley,” Sean began, “you are the only friend outside the Order I have ever had in my life…I realize that this needs to happen in order to preserve both our worlds.” Sean paused and took a deep breath, and then he answered. “I will do it.” He said, “you have my word of honor that I will not let anything happen to this boy and that he will be ready to face his destiny.”

“I will hold you to that,” Bill responded, “and I know that I will not be disappointed.”

“So,” Sean said as he paid the bill for their dinners, “when do I meet this boy and when do we leave?”

“You will meet him tomorrow when you come to stay at my parent’s home in the Burrow, and you will leave in seven days.”

“Why so long?” Sean asked.

“Because it gives you time to get to know Harry, my family, and some of the Order members. Plus, my wedding is in five days…” Bill paused. “And I was hoping that you would be my best man.”

“Alright,” Sean responded, “unless you want me to wear these robes, I will need to get some new clothes…and congratulations, I look forward to meeting the bride.”
Chapter 2: The Arrival

Fleur Delacour was walking around the kitchen and humming a happy tune. The prospect of being married to her beloved Bill in only one week thrilled her to no end. Nothing could take her away from the cloud that she was on, she only wished that Bill was there now so that she could hold him in her arms and run her fingers through his long red hair.

“Oh Fleur,” Molly Weasley made her way into the kitchen, “why did you stop, you have such a lovely voice.”

“I am just missing Bill,” Fleur said, “I wish ‘e was ‘ere.”

“I know,” Molly said, “but this should cheer you up,” she said handing Fleur a piece of parchment.

“When did zhis arrive?” she asked Mrs. Weasley

“Just this morning by owl.” Fleur read the note.

Dearest Fleur:

I am writing to you from the Leaky Cauldron, where I am staying the night to pick up a friend of mine from King’s Cross Station for the wedding. I will be bringing him home the day after tomorrow, I am sure that you and the family will love him, he is a gentleman, a scholar, and will be very helpful around the house in preparing for the wedding. I love you more than I could ever express in words, but I will have the rest of both our lives to try.

I remain yours forever,

Bill.

PS Please give the other note to my mum, merci.

Fleur couldn’t help but smile at the merci at the end of the note and then took the other note to give to her soon to be mother-in-law. “Molly,” Fleur called out enthusiastically, “eet’s from Bill, and zere is a note for you as well.”

Mrs. Weasley came and took her note, “thank you Fleur.” She read Bill’s note to her:

Mum:

I am staying the night at the Leaky Cauldron and will be coming home the day after tomorrow. I will be bringing my best man with me and would like it if he could stay with us. He doesn’t need a bed and is even content with sleeping outside. I only ask that he be allowed to stay with us, I want all of you to meet him, and be warned that he is a Muggle, so some things may be odd or new to him. Will see you soon.

Your son,

Bill

PS We will need a place to keep two horses for about a week.

Molly was thrilled to hear that Bill would be home…she checked the date on the note, “today!” she exclaimed aloud prompting a response from Fleur and Ginny.
“What is it?” Ginny asked slightly alarmed.

“Harrel must have delivered these,” Mrs. Weasley said in a frantic tone, “Bill is coming here today, and he is bringing his best man with him!”

“Bill is coming home today?” Fleur said in delight.

“But we can’t have his friend seeing the house like this” Mrs. Weasley said in an alarmed tone.

Fleur and Ginny, who had become like sisters over the last little while, knew that there was no arguing with Mrs. Weasley at this point. The result being that the three of them, and Mr. Weasley when he arrived home from work, spent the day sweeping, dusting, and other wise making the Burrow presentable for Bill and their arriving guest, as well as preparing a place for the horses, which was done by transfiguring a tree into a small stable. After they finished sprucing up the place, they settled down for a little rest. After a few moments, they heard horses approaching and prepared to greet Bill and their guest.

Bill and Sean rode in on the two horses that Sean had arranged with the Order of St. George to be left for them in London. They came to a stop a few paces before the Burrow and dismounted.

“You can see the stable from here” Bill said to Sean as he gestured to the stable to the side. “We’ll take the horses there together and then you can meet the family.” Sean nodded and they led the horses up the hill to the stable.

Soon after they finished loading the horses they started towards the Burrow and saw a few figures coming out of the house. Bill ran ahead as one figure began running towards them, Sean could see them embrace. Bill picked up the young woman and spun her around in the air, before placing her on the ground and planting a long passionate kiss on her lips.

“I missed you,” Fleur said to Bill.

“You know I will always come back to you” Bill said “I’d be stupid not to.”

“William Weasley,” Mrs. Weasley said as she embraced her son.

“Hey mum,” Bill said as he embraced her and kissed her on the cheek.

“Hey there big brother” Ginny said coming to Bill’s side and giving him a hug.

“Nice to see you son,” Mr. Weasley said giving Bill a man hug “how is work?” Bill waved Sean over and he came by the light next to the front door, he was still dressed in his monk’s hood and cloak, with his crucifix on the outside of the robe…and then he threw back the hood.

All three of the women had to suppress gasps when they saw him remove his hood and reveal his blonde crew cut, strong handsome face, and Prussian blue eyes. Since she was the only one who was single, Ginny was especially taken aback by the 5’10” 175 pound muscular monk standing before them all.

“Fleur, Mum, Dad, Ginny,” Bill began “this is my good friend Sean O’Sullivan, I have invited him to be the best man at the wedding.”

Sean began to personally greet all the people before him, starting with Fleur. “You must be the bride, enchante mademoiselle,” Sean said in his thick Irish accent as he kissed Fleur’s extended hand.

“You speak Fraunch?” Fleur asked.

“Oui,” Sean responded.
"I can tell that you are not from France with your accent," Fleur began in French, “so where did you learn?” she asked still in French.

Sean responded in perfect French with “In what I do, we are often sent to foreign lands. I always like to learn some of the language, I became fluent in French when I was given an assignment there.”

“It’s so interesting to hear my language spoken with an accent instead of me always speaking a different language in my accent” Fleur responded with undisguised enthusiasm.

“I am glad to bring you some measure of happiness,” Sean responded “I promise only to speak to you in French.”

Fleur was beyond impressed with Sean’s cavalier and gentlemanly manner as well as his prowess at speaking her language. He next moved on to Ginny who was awning him to no end. This was the first real young adult male she had seen, and despite his imperfections, she thought he looked perfect.

“You must be Ginerva,” Sean stated as he gently took her hand and brought his lips to it. Although no one would have noticed it, Sean was pausing to stare at the young woman in front of him. Ginny was now sporting a sexy athletic figure to go with her long red hair. Her features were maturing quite nicely and she had become a beautiful young woman at sixteen years of age. She now stood at five feet six inches, an inch taller than her best friend Hermione Granger.

Sean came out of his pause to continue to the obviously awe-struck woman in front of him. “Your brother has told me much about you.”

“Oh,” Ginny sighed, “Y…Y…you can c-c-c-call me G-g-g-Ginny, and I… I… I hope that it was all… good.” Sean was slightly confused as to why Ginny was acting the way she was around him, but didn’t think much of it.

“Of course,” Sean said, “he tells me you are quite the brainy athlete and that you are a great little sister.” After a brief pause with Sean waiting for a response, and Ginny simply staring at him almost dumbfounded, Sean said “a pleasure to meet you,” and then moved onto Mrs. Weasley.

“You must be the mother,” Sean said as he kissed Mrs. Weasley’s hand the same way he had Fleur and Ginny. “You are obviously a good woman for Bill to turn out the way he did.”

“Oh,” Mrs. Weasley said flustered, “thank you.” It was obvious to Bill that what he had written about his family loving Sean was dead on accurate, if Sean didn’t practice celibacy in the Order of St. George, he would’ve had more women than Casanova.

He reached out and took Mr. Weasley’s hand in a firm hand shake, “Mr. Weasley, it is a pleasure to meet you.”

“Like wise young man” Mr. Weasley responded.

“Well,” Mrs. Weasley began, “I am sure that you and your friend”

“Forgive me for interrupting,” Sean interjected, “but please call me Sean.”

“Terribly sorry” Mrs. Weasley said, “but I am sure that the two of you would like to come in and relax, I’ve made some soup and you could have some hot tea.”

“That would be wonderful,” Bill replied, with his arm now around Fleur’s waist as she leaned against his chest.

They all went inside and sat down in the main room while Mrs. Weasley brought Bill and Sean their soup and tea. Bill had warned Sean that there would most likely be a lot of questioning from his family, so Sean was prepared.
“So,” Mrs. Weasley began, “where are you from originally Sean?”

“I come from Ireland,” Sean stated.

“Where about?” she further inquired.

“A town called Mullingar, it’s northwest of Dublin, around the central part of the island” Sean replied.

“Is that where you studied,” Mrs. Weasley continued, “Bill tells me you are quite the scholar.”

“I don’t know about that,” Sean replied slightly embarrassed, “I have studied quite a bit though in my life.”

“In Ireland?” Mrs. Weasley asked.

“As well as France, China, Japan, Thailand, Hungary, and Romania” Sean replied, pausing to recall all the places where he had studied and learned.

“Wow,” Ginny said unable to contain her wonder and fascination. “What were you studying?” she added.

Sean paused for a moment; he didn’t think it best to tell them that he was mainly studying different fighting styles in China, Japan, and Thailand, so he said what he had been studying in the other three.

“My guardian wanted me to get a good education, he says that knowledge is power. So, he sent me around the world to learn about different cultures and languages. I also learned about the basic things such as mathematics, history, the arts and so forth.”

“Do you speak any of the languages of the places where you went?” Mrs. Weasley asked.

“I learned all of them while I was there” Sean answered. There wasn’t much conversation for a while after that since Ginny, Fleur, and Mrs. Weasley were all looking Sean over…they couldn’t believe that he was a Muggle, he looked like some kind of Olympian deity with short hair or a male Veela.

Mr. Weasley however was thrilled to finally have a real Muggle in his home as a guest, he didn’t know where to begin.

“Where have you been lately?” Mr. Weasley finally got out.

“I have been in Romania for the past while” Sean answered.

“Ah,” Mr. Weasley began, “have you by any chance met my son Charles, he tames dragons there.”

“Bill actually asked me about that.” Sean began, “but I’ve been there on assignment and haven’t had opportunities to look people up.”

Mr. Weasley couldn’t help himself any longer, he let out a Muggle question that had been tormenting him for ages, “Can you tell me…” Mr. Weasley began with a very eager and inquisitive tone, “what is the purpose of a rubber duck?”

Sean remembered having one as a child, and he explained that it was a simple toy used to entertain infants and young children while they were being bathed, absolutely thrilling Mr. Weasley.

Most of the evening passed with Mr. Weasley prying Sean for more information about Muggles and their way of life. Sean was apologetic about not being able to answer all of his questions, explaining that he had lived a monastic lifestyle since he was five years old so he couldn’t answer all of them. He was however able to give Mr. Weasley a basic answer as to how an airplane stays up, which fascinated Mr. Weasley to no end.

After dinner Sean volunteered to clean up, but Mrs. Weasley explained that the dishes would clean themselves. Sean was
taken aback, and then he saw the dishes being cleaned without anyone having to scrub them. He couldn’t mask his astonishment, Fleur and the Weasleys watched as Sean ran his hands around the dishes looking for wires or anything else that would explain how this was possible.

After a minute or two Bill offered to show Sean to his room.

Sean awoke very early the next morning like he was used to doing back at the monasteries, he made his bed and looked around for anything else he could do. When he found nothing, he dressed himself in his training robes, which were fashioned in the style of Chinese martial arts robes with a black belt holding them closed, took some of his weapons that he had in his duffle bag, and went outside to train.

He loved being outside in the open air, especially in the secluded countryside where the Burrow was located. He took a long and deep breath first, and then began his warm-up. After doing fifty knuckle push-ups, he did one hundred sit-ups and some stretches. The last part of his warm-up was his split, he found a couple of stools in the stable, set them about a foot apart, jumped up in the air, and spread out his legs across them. He had learned to drown out the pain and strain, and instead focused on emptying his mind as his legs and groin muscles held up his body.

After about a minute, he came down and began to practice his unarmed combat, he punched, kicked, blocked, elbowed, kneed, and parried at the air until he was satisfied. He then picked up his two swords and practiced with them, first one at a time in each hand, and then together. After this he did the same with a pair of large knives. He then strapped a metal crossbow to his left arm and practiced shooting arrows at a notch in a nearby tree. He hit the notch dead center with the first arrow, and then fired nine more, each one splitting the previously fired one perfectly down the center. He finished his training by running around the burrow grounds, letting out several heated breaths as he finished.

Unknown to him, his training had attracted an audience, Mrs. Weasley had been the first to notice after she had sent Arthur off to work, and just sat in front of the window watching him.

After a while Fleur and Ginny had joined her and remained there watching, with the three of them giving off audible gasps when the wind would bring Sean’s robe out enough for them to get a glimpse of his toned mid-section. “E is so ‘andsome,” Fleur swooned, “like something frum a fairy tale.”

“Gilderoy Lockhart couldn’t hold a candle to him, that’s for sure” Mrs. Weasley remarked.

“He must be a male Veela.” Ginny stated. “If all Muggles look like him,” she continued “then I need to go live in the Muggle world after Hogwarts.”

They were all caught up in their observing when Bill came in and made them all jump when he asked, “Is there something going on out there that I should be aware of?”

“Ahh!” the three of them gasped at once, as they turned to see Bill standing in the doorway with his long hair flowing back and a smile across his face.

“It’s okay for Ginny because she’s single, but mother,” Bill said in a playfully mortified tone, “you should be ashamed of your

“Ooh,” Mrs. Weasley said looking back at Sean as he did a foot-sweep followed by a turn-around kick and then a flying heel kick, “if I wasn’t married I would go after that young man.”

"I wish I was older,” Ginny added with disgust.

“You are a great man,” Fleur said to her fiancée as she came to give him his good morning hug and kiss, “but I ‘ave to admit that your friend is very ‘andsome.”

“I think he’s gorgeous,” Ginny stated straight up, “are you sure that he’s a Muggle?”
“I’m sure,” Bill said as he finished kissing his Fleur and brought her to rest under his head as she leaned against the front of his chest. “But I am glad to see that I was right.”

“Right about what?” Mrs. Weasley asked.

“That all of you would absolutely love him.”
Chapter 3: The Meeting

Three days after they arrived Bill and Sean went by the temporary stable and discussed the final details of the plan for Harry. “You go on ahead,” Sean said, “I’ve got to feed the horses and I could use a little training before I turn in for the night.

“You remember where your room is?” Bill asked, Sean nodded in response. “Then good night,” Bill said.

“Good night” Sean responded.

Bill came into the Burrow to find his parents, Lupin, Tonks, and to his surprise Hermione Granger, standing in the main room, and from the look of things they were waiting for him. While Bill knew that some Order Members would be coming over a few days before the wedding to hear the final stages of his plan and meet his Muggle friend who was so essential to it, he wasn’t expecting Hermione. From the look he was getting from her and his parents, who knew nothing of Sean’s profession or role in the plan, he knew there was some kind of issue budding.

“I’m sure that there is something that you want to ask me,” Bill said immediately not wanting to dance around whatever the issue was, “so ask away.”

The group looked at Molly; obviously they figured that the mother was the best one to begin. “We know that you have been through a lot Bill,” Molly began “and we are all very happy for your marriage and that Sean could be here for it.” Molly stopped, feeling a little awkward and not knowing how to continue. She decided that the direct approach would be best and just blurted out what she was thinking.

“We are all concerned about Harry after what happened at Hogwarts, and we realize that he needs help at this point in his life…but we need to know who exactly Sean is and why he’s here.” Bill had shared his plan for Harry with Lupin since he had known Harry personally and had been a great help to him, and he figured that the rest of them now knew that Sean would be involved with Harry in some way.

“I first met Sean when he came to Gringotts with Dumbledore as a representative of the Order of St. George when Dumbledore came to set up a fund for that organization.”

“You mean he is in the Order of St. George?” Tonks said with undisguised surprise and a hint of awe. “I thought that organization was some sort of myth,” she then blurted out.

“Sean is a Knight of the Order of St. George, and they like to keep that mystique about them,” Bill began, “with the Muggles simply refusing to believe in demons and such and the magical world, with the exception of Dumbledore, ignoring them, that’s pretty much what they have become…a myth.”

“What is the Order of St. George?” Hermione asked with a mixture of curiosity and demand.

“I am sure that you are familiar with the legend of St. George and the Dragon” Bill said already knowing the answer. Hermione nodded and Bill took that as a sign to continue. “Well, after he killed the dragon, religious authorities asked George to begin training other Knights to fight wicked dragons in order to keep the kingdom and world safe. As time went by it became an exclusive order, and as more demonic creatures began to surface, the training evolved and the Knights began to specialize in specific creatures.”

“And this Sean,” Hermione began, “what does he specialize in?”

“He is the best vampire hunter in more than a century” Bill stated.

“So what does all this have to do with Harry?” Lupin asked.
"I never said any of this had anything to do with Harry," Bill stated, "I was merely answering mum’s question about the best man."

“So he’s only here for the wedding?” Mrs. Weasley asked searchingly.

“Not entirely,” Bill said, “but it’s Order of the Phoenix business, so I will have to ask you to leave Hermione.”

“What makes you think this doesn’t concern me!” Hermione protested. “I have just as much or more at stake in this whole war than anyone else, and I can help…and if this concerns Harry there is no way that I don’t want to know about it!” Bill and the other Order members were taken aback by Hermione’s sudden boldness, but Bill relented.

“We respect all that you have done in helping Harry and the effort against Voldemort,” Bill started, “and no one will dispute that you are the brightest witch of your age. But the fact of the matter is that you aren’t old enough to grasp the severity of the situation and that much of what I am about to say is information that absolutely cannot leave the Order of the Phoenix.”

“With all due respect,” Lupin interjected “I invited Miss Granger here for this meeting. She was very insistent on knowing everything that has to do with Harry now that he is unprotected.” Lupin paused at this, it reminded him of the recent tragedies of Sirius and Dumbledore and the fact that Harry had enjoyed protection up until this point, and now he didn’t even have that anymore. “She could,” Lupin continued referring to Hermione “also be able to help us in a variety of ways…she is the brightest witch of her age.”

“I don’t care about the Order…either Order,” Hermione began with an increasingly quiet tone of mingled sadness and passion, “I only care about…about Harry, I don’t want anything to happen to him.” There was a silence, and then Bill began to comprehend the heart of the matter.

“You’ve become very fond of him haven’t you?” Bill said with compassion in his voice.

“Yes,” Hermione answered in a tense whisper, “Yes, I have been for some time now.” Bill paused, this was definitely something that he didn’t expect, and it complicated things. He figured that since Harry and Ginny were no longer an item, that he wouldn’t have to worry about any sort of “girlfriend factor” in the plan.

Bill looked to Lupin for help in this matter, Lupin was the highest-ranking Order member present, but he had a suspicion that he had already stated his case and would not be wavering. This however was a complication that Bill had not foreseen, but there was too much at risk to go back on the plan now.

“Okay,” Bill said, “but you must understand that this does not leave this room, with the exception of McGonagall, Kingsley, and Moody we have the whole of the leadership of the Order of the Phoenix here in this room.” Hermione couldn’t help but notice how Bill was being very take charge in this situation; it was as if he was the one running the order and not McGonagall.

“Go on Bill,” Lupin said “but first you may want to fill in Miss Granger about what we know so far.” Bill then showed Hermione the intercepted parchment, to which Hermione gasped and began to cry in fear and dread.

“They want to kill him right there in front of all of Hogwarts!” she gasped, “We have to do something.”

“You are very right Hermione,” Lupin stated with compassion in his voice in an attempt to comfort her.

Lupin began, “After we intercepted this communiqué, we realized that we had to act, we also realized that with this information we had a great opportunity to lure out Voldemort and his forces for one final battle and end all of this.” Lupin stopped to gage Hermione’s reaction to all this, and she seemed to be taking it well, so he continued. “We also realized that we would need to keep Harry safe and away from danger, but at the same time not let on that we knew about Voldemort’s plan. It was Bill who came up with the only plan we could think of. He proposed hiding Harry within the Order
of St. George, a Muggle group, with an old friend of his who would train him to fight You-Know-Who in a way that he would never expect.”

“And what way is that,” Hermione asked with worry in her voice and trembling from crying.

“He is going to fight Voldemort by incorporating Muggle fighting with magic. Voldemort knows nothing of Muggle combat because he is too prideful of his own abilities with magic, as are all Death Eaters.”

“And what makes you think that this Sean person is capable of helping Harry?” Hermione asked, her voice fraught with conc...

“I can explain that,” Bill said “Sean is a highly trained, heavily experienced, and incomparably skilled vampire hunter” he stated with a no-nonsense tone, “he is proficient in various forms of martial arts, he is an expert tracker, and he is familiar with the magical world…including the dark arts. There is no one else in the entire world more qualified than Sean for this assignment, wizard, Muggle, or otherwise” Bill finished, and by the tone of his voice it was obvious that he felt strongly about all this.

“But he has never fought against wizards before” Hermione added.

“Sean and a few other members of the Order of St. George were allowed by the Orders of St. George and the Phoenix to train with Dumbledore during last summer as to how to combat a wizard, but he has yet to fight one face to face in a life or death situation.” Bill admitted the last part grudgingly but with a tone that still displayed complete confidence in his friend.

“Do you trust him?” Hermione asked still shaken from the prospect of Harry being most likely abducted and tortured before being murdered before the Hogwarts student body.

“I would trust Sean with my life, with my Fleur, and with my first-born child, and would never look back on it.” Bill ended with a defiant tone that showed his honesty and absolute resolution in the matter.

“Then I will too,” she said with a low voice, “just let me know how I can help.”

“Do you know any spells to heal bruises and broken bones or to repair glasses” a male voice with a thick Irish accent said. They all turned to see Sean standing in the doorway with his arms folded over his chest and dressed in dark-blue jeans and a dark-colored button down shirt. “Because if he is going to be ready to face Voldemort by the end of the summer, his training will have to be very demanding and we won’t have time to allow bones and bruises to heal, or glasses to be mended

Hermione nodded and took a good look at the stranger standing in the doorway, she knew that it had to be Sean; he had an aura about him that said warrior and she could see the crucifix around his neck. “Then I will need you to teach him to perform these on himself, there is no magical hospital wing where we are going.”

“I will gladly help with that,” Hermione said with a little nervousness, she was the brightest witch in her age and had put two and two together about Harry needing to know how to fix broken bones. “But would you be willing to do me a favor?” she asked Sean.

“And what might that be?” Sean asked.

“Well…” Hermione began, hoping that Sean would agree to do what she was asking.
Chapter 4: Introductions

Harry Potter woke up in his bedroom in 12 Grimmauld Place and looked around groggily, he had not been sleeping very well since Dumbledore had been killed and had come to grips with having been controlled by Voldemort. Ginny had not taken it well when Harry had revealed that his animal attraction to her had been as a result of Voldemort’s manipulations.

It was actually Tonks who had helped discover this, she and Lupin had probed Harry’s mind and found that Voldemort had been trying to sow seeds of dissension between himself and those closest to him. The Dark Lord had figured that by Harry being with Ginny it would put a rift between him and the Weasleys (especially Ron) and that he would become too distracted to prepare for the inevitable final confrontation. It was very disconcerting for Harry to learn that the “beast” he felt raging inside him was actually Voldemort. Harry was also confused about why Voldemort hadn’t done anything to create a rift between him and Hermione, he would have thought that with her superior intellect and usefulness that Voldemort would want to eliminate Hermione first off.

Harry smiled as he thought of Lupin and Tonks. Ever since the incident at the end of last year, Tonks had been insistent on having a relationship with Lupin. He had of course kept his distance, afraid of hurting Tonks or of dragging her down with him. Finally, after much effort on the part of Tonks, and much urging by the Weasleys and other friends, Lupin gave in and had begun to court Tonks. Harry was sure that the two of them would be very happy together and hoped to see them in the future.

Harry had returned to the Dursleys just like Dumbledore had wanted, he had convinced Hermione and Ron that this was something that he absolutely had to do on his own because it was something that did not involve either of them in any way shape or form. He had arrived at 4 Privett Drive and had told his Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia, and cousin Dudley that he was moving out and going to his new home. He thanked them for taking him and let them know that he wouldn’t be a bother to them anymore. They had all bid him goodbye, half-heartedly…but still.

Harry had been extended invitations by the Weasleys and several Order members to stay with them until Hogwarts opened up for the next term…what would have been his final term before graduating from the school and beginning his adult wizard life in earnest, if he were coming back. But he had insisted that he was fine and that he needed some time alone with his thoughts and to come to grips with the situation his life was in now. For the first time in his life he had no one to protect him, he had no mentor figure headmaster, he had no caring godfather, and he could not stand to stay with the Dursleys for another minute.

For the first time in his life, Harry was truly alone, and now he knew it, and this dawned on him in a very real and horrific way. Everyday for him passed by with an even greater realization that Dumbledore, Sirius, his parents, and every other person who was standing between him and Voldemort was either dead, out of commission, or had enough problems of their own…in short, he was on his own.

The only two people that knew Harry had made up his mind to not return to Hogwarts even though they were reopening the school were Hermione and Ron and they had a nonverbal agreement to not let it become common knowledge. They all knew that if news of his decision got out that it would put everyone in an uproar and the resistance against Voldemort and everything else that was going on would be thrown off course and that was the last thing any of them needed.

With Kreacher working at Hogwarts Harry had the house all to himself, he felt that it was good for him to get used to being alone…because he was. He would often wander the halls of his new home and ponder about what he was going to do and how he was going to do it. At night he would stand on the balcony and look at the stars, always stopping to focus on Sirius the dog star and would contemplate his life, how it had began, what it had become, and where it would go from her.

He thought about Hermione and Ron, and the other people that he cared about in his life. He wondered about Lupin and Tonks and what they were going to do with their lives. To his surprise, he found himself thinking a lot about Hermione, but then again she was one of his best friends…yet he found himself thinking about her in ways that he never thought about.
any of his friends.

But he let that slide; he still had to think about how he was going to convince Hermione and Ron not to go with him. He had planned on going to the Burrow a few days before the wedding to spend some time with the group that had become like a surrogate family to him, he would say his goodbyes after the wedding, then he would leave before any of them woke up.

He would go to Godric’s Hollow to pay his respects to his parents and see where it all began, where his mother had given the ultimate sacrifice to preserve his own life, where Voldemort had marked him as his equal. He felt around for his glasses as he brushed a strand of his jet-black hair away from his eyes. His hair had grown down to the base of his neck and also came down in the front. After he found his glasses, he clutched at the fake Horcrux that he always carried with him and resolved further upon his plan.

After careful planning and packing, as well as a few trips to Gringott’s, for money for the journey and a special going away present for Hermione, which currently resided in his pocket, Harry was ready for his journey. Mrs. Weasley had given him a gift of floo powder at Dumbledore’s funeral, saying that anytime Harry wanted to he could come to the Burrow to stay with loved ones and then he would be given more powder for his next visit. With that he took one last look around the house of his godfather, went to the fireplace, loudly and clearly said “the burrow!” then threw down the powder and was gone.

He arrived at the Burrow and could see several people already assembled in the next room, all of the Weasleys were there, even Percy, there were also several members of the Order there, and “Hermione!” he thought to himself. “They must be here for the wedding” Harry reasoned to himself. “They can’t possibly know about my plans.”

Harry’s arrival had caused a little bit of commotion and a few people turned their attention to the fireplace area to find Harry there with a small bag and a sheepish expression on his face, slightly embarrassed for having interrupted. He had expected Ginny or Mrs. Weasley to come and greet him upon his arrival; oddly enough to him it was Hermione who ran to greet him. “Harry!” She said with delight as she ran to him and pulled him to her in a tight hug that Harry felt was a little too strong and too long to be a “friend” hug…once again he dismissed this thought.

“Hi Hermione, how’s your summer been?” Harry asked after a brief pause, he couldn’t help but stare at her after they broke the hug…she looked so beautiful standing there looking into his emerald green eyes as he looked into her cinnamon brown ones, which were conveying sadness.

“I’ve been fine,” she began “I convinced my parents to let me finish up at Hogwarts.” She tried to say this with enthusiasm, but none came out. “They let me come here for the wedding and then I’m going back until the start of term.”

Harry was a little confused at the contrast in her tones, he had expected her to sound ecstatic about returning to school, but at the same time he wondered what happened to her resolve to go to hell and back with him and Ron for the Horcruxes…he decided not to ask her though because he didn’t want anyone to know about his plans. She also seemed to hold him just a little tighter than usual, and there was sadness in her eyes that he couldn’t quite place.

Ginny came and gave him a hug, this one was a little longer than a friend hug, but felt like a little sister one. Harry was beginning to feel confused and it was clear to him that everything had changed or was changing…and it would never go back to the way it was. “Hey there mate,” Ron said brightly to Harry, giving him a masculine hug. Now Harry was really confused, Ron was acting as though Harry was his brother who was going off to war.

Mrs. Weasley gave Harry a hug that conveyed a similar sentiment. “You were always such a wonderful young man,” Mrs. Weasley sobbed as she crushed Harry to herself. “You deserve better than all of this, it’s just not fair!”

Fred and George came and shook Harry’s hand, “thanks for everything Harry, without you we wouldn’t be where we are and enjoying what we are…we owe you everything mate.”

Fleur came and kissed Harry on each of his cheeks, “You do deserve better zan zees ‘Arry,” she said “and Bill and I will be ‘oping for your success,” she had an air of genuine caring and sincerity in her words that made Harry wonder what
everyone was on about.

Tonks, Kingsley, Charlie, Percy, and Lupin all in turn came and greeted Harry, giving him words of encouragement and telling him to listen and learn…and not to think or worry about any of them.

He looked around wondering where Bill, the groom apparent was, he looked around the group of people now gathered around him like assembled mourners and found Bill outside talking to a man he had never seen before. He looked to be Bill’s same age, he stood at 5’ 10” with a trim muscular build, Prussian blue eyes, a normal-sized nose, and short blonde hair put in a crew cut, he wore a pair of dark blue jeans and a buttoned up navy blue shirt, he held something in his hand that was obscured by the dark night outside. He heard Bill talking to him as he walked up.

“…The orders are that no more communication be made between them until they have Harry, they are obviously not planning on anyone being able to stand between them and their objective…” Bill stopped abruptly as Harry walked up to them, he noticed that the man standing next to Bill wore a crucifix around his neck and had strong calloused hands.

“Hi Bill,” Harry began, “I hope that you don’t mind I showed up a few days before the wedding, I wanted to spend some time with you and your family…but I didn’t expect so many people to be here this early.”

Bill paused and put a hand on Harry’s shoulder, “You are very observant Harry,” Bill started, “there is something you should know about,” he pointed to the man standing next to him. “This is Sean O’Sullivan, he’ll be your caretaker for the summer.”

Harry didn’t know what to think, on one hand he now knew why everyone was treating him like they were, he was being put in the care of a total stranger for the summer. Harry felt more than a little infuriated by this, but he had been through so much that he wasn’t sure how to react. “What?” was all that he could manage as a response to Bill’s announcem

“Whatever plans you had for the Summer are null and void,” Bill said to Harry with a hint of nothing but seriousness, “there is too much at stake now, you will go with Sean, you will listen to what he has to say, and you will do everything he tells you.”

“What the hell do you think you’re doing!” Harry retorted. “After all I’ve been through and after everything that has happened you of all people have the nerve to tell me what to do!” They were far enough away from the rest of the crowd that they did not cause too much of a scene, but the people inside knew that the three of them needed to be left alone.

“Technically, seeing as how you aren’t in the Order,” Bill began, “I shouldn’t be showing you this, but since it concerns you directly, have a look.” Bill showed Harry the parchment and Harry read it:

Severus:

I am delighted to hear that you have disposed of Albus, there is now no one to stand between me and the Potter boy.

The prophecy will be fulfilled, and I shall rule once more.

I have an assignment for you, one that I entrust you with given your many years of faithful service and the singular act of disposing of the one wizard who stood a chance against me. You will take Bellatrix Lestrange and find Harry Potter, if there are any with him, kill them immediately.
You will bring Potter to me alive, destroy his wand, and
Restrain him. The strike at Hogwarts will occur at the opening
Feast, Potter will be killed in front of them as the deathblow to
Those who dare oppose me. Apprehend him with as little trouble as
Possible, we don't want too much attention so we can have a greater
Effect when we kill him. I know you will succeed.
--Lord Voldemort.

Harry paused after reading the message. Bill took the parchment back from him as Harry gave him a respectful and honest apology. "No need," Bill said, "but hopefully now you understand why you can't stay anywhere but with Sean."

"I don't understand," Harry said, "why him, and who exactly is he?"

"I will leave the two of you to talk," Bill said "I am sure that you have much to discuss." With that, Bill took his leave and went back into the house to be with his fiancée and the others that were assembled there.

There was a long pause between the two of them, Harry was looking Sean up and down, and Sean had his piercing gaze fixed on Harry. Sean was content to let Harry begin the conversation, he knew that it was better for him to begin since this was all very new to him and he was still very young. Sean had never met Harry before, but he knew why the others were saying that he didn't deserve what he had been given. He noticed the lack of innocence on the boy's face; he knew that he had been forced to become a man without having a real childhood...just like him.

"Who are you exactly?" Harry asked the Irish monk in front of him.

"Bill already told you my name," Sean began. "But you need to come with me because, as you know from the message, the Dark Lord has sent his two most dangerous Death Eaters after you with instructions to kill you and anyone who is with you." Sean paused for a moment to allow his words to register with the young wizard in front of him.

"I am a Knight in an organization called the Order of Saint George," Sean began again, "a monastic order ordained to protect those who cannot protect themselves by destroying the demons that inhabit this world and pray on the innocent. I specialize in vampires, but others will hunt werewolves some will also destroy dangerous rouge dragons or giants, and some specialize in Inferi."

Harry had tensed up when Sean mentioned werewolves, "Oh God," he said aloud "I won't let you kill Remus," he said drawing out his wand defensively.

"Don't worry," Sean said, "I am not going to harm your friend Remus Lupin," Harry still tensed and held out his wand as Sean continued, "In the Order we strive to spare those who cannot help what they are and resist the demonic urges of their condition...we once had a vampire who was a Knight."

"But why am I going with you?" Harry asked Sean with his wand still drawn.

"Voldemort is very prideful," Sean began, and Harry was surprised by how calmly Sean used Voldemort's name. "He doesn't expect a boy wizard bereft of any magical protection and a Muggle to be any threat."

"You're a Muggle!" Harry blurted out loudly realizing why Sean used Voldemort's name so calmly.

"Aye" Sean responded with his thick Irish accent, "surprised?"
"I just never thought that a Muggle would be this involved in my life and the fight against the Dark Lord."

“You will find Mr. Potter, that one can find help, hope, and inspiration in the most unlikely of places. We just need to have eyes to see and the sense to recognize and accept it when we find it.” Harry stopped and took in all that had just happened. In a few minutes he had learned that he would be spending his summer training with some kind of religious Muggle vampire hunter who would be teaching him to fight the Dark Lord, who had just sent the two Death Eaters who had taken the most from him to capture him to become some kind of sacrificial lamb. It was a lot to take in for Harry, he felt more than a little overwhelmed and wanted to know more, but he needed to make it clear that he wasn’t coming with Se

“I can’t go with you,” Harry replied, “I have something that I need to do.”

“You need to find the Horcruxes that make up the entire soul of Lord Voldemort so that you can vanquish him once and for all” Sean stated in his usual monotone voice.

“Yeah,” Harry replied with a surprise that wasn’t at all disguised, “how do you know about all that?”

“Your mentor…if I am at liberty to call Albus Dumbledore such” Sean waited until Harry gave him an affirmative nod, “confided in the Order of St. George quite a bit,” Sean continued, “he told us about the Horcruxes and hoped that we could help him find and destroy them.”

As Sean spoke he extended his hand to reveal what he had been holding. “But you don’t have to worry about that,” Sean said as he held the goblet up to show Harry. Night had fallen, but after Harry took out his wand and uttered “lumos” he saw that Sean was holding up a goblet with the name Helga Hufflepuff inscribed on the side. Inside the cup Harry saw a bracelet and a silver locket and immediately picked up the locket to look at it.

“Are these real?” Harry asked slightly bewildered.

“Aye,” Sean said “These are real, the goblet belonged to Helga Hufflepuff, the locket belonged to Salazar Slytherin, and this bracelet” he said holding it up “belonged to Rowena Ravenclaw. All that is left is to destroy the snake Nagini and then the part of Voldemort’s soul that resides in his body.”

Harry was perplexed at this, “why haven’t you destroyed them?” Harry asked. “Because Voldemort would notice if the greater part of what is left of his soul was suddenly destroyed; and we need to catch him completely off guard.” Sean paused before continuing; “you aren’t ready to face him…yet” he began speaking to Harry. “But I can and will help you, I can teach you how to empty your mind to master occlumency, which will probably help you master illigumency, how to fight with your body and mind, how to face, accept, and overcome your fears and shortcomings, how to use means of fighting that are just as or more effective than magic, and how to become the great wizard and warrior that you are prophesied to become.”

Harry paused after Sean finished this thought, “why are you doing this?” Harry asked, whatever anger he was feeling was now gone, he now felt astonished, and confused.

“Because I made a promise to a friend to train you and keep you safe. I also realize that you have to become who and what you were born to be so that both our worlds can survive.” Harry realized as well as Sean had at King’s Cross Station that this had to be.

“Where are we going for this?” Harry asked Sean.

“We will be going to the Order Monastery located in the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland,” Sean began, “We will be going to the water first by horse, have you ever ridden a horse?”

“I have ridden on a couple of creatures that were part horse,” Harry responded thinking of his experiences with Buckbeak and Thestrals.
“That will have to do,” Sean stated, “From there we will continue to the island by boat and then go to the monastery.”

“When do we leave?” Harry asked with a hint of nervousness in his voice.

“We will be leaving at first light the day after the wedding.” Sean stated very matter-of-factly.

“You’re staying for the wedding?” Harry asked.

“Aye,” answered Sean, “I’m the best man.”
Chapter 5: Confessions

After Sean’s announcement to Harry, Sean said for him to go and get some rest, “There are a lot of people in there who care about you Potter,” Sean added, “it would be good of you to let them give you their best for the next few days that you will be here.”

Harry simply nodded and then returned to the house where he found that everyone had retired for the evening, he noticed what time it was, “3 AM,” he thought to himself, “when did I come to this?”

Harry sat on a couch in the living room and thought of everything that had just happened. He wondered to himself why all of this was happening to him, why he couldn’t just have had a normal life, or at least one of joy and happiness like his friend Ron with his good family and stable life. He thought of Cho Chang and Ginny and why he couldn’t have had a good relationship in his life, he had to be either “the chosen one” or “the boy who lived”, he couldn’t just be Harry Potter…and he would never be able to shake that off.

He realized that he wasn’t going to be getting to sleep anytime soon. He didn’t really want to stay in the dark at this time either. He gathered some wood into the fireplace and hoped that the Weasleys wouldn’t mind him making a small fire, “Inflamare” he said pointing his wand. He enjoyed the small crackle of the flames in front of him, “I’ll just sleep here on the couch tonight” he thought to himself. “That way no one will be disturbed.”

Harry had a lot of time to think, and he wondered how his life had come to this and what lay in store with his new Muggle guardian. “Harry?” He heard a familiar female voice say lightly to him in the dark, and he saw the form of Hermione Granger approaching him. “What are you doing still awake?” she asked.

“I could ask you the same thing,” Harry stated.

“I can’t sleep,” Hermione retorted, “what’s your excuse?”

“I have a lot on my mind right now,” Harry said.

“I can imagine,” Hermione said as she settled next to him on the couch, “it might help if you shared some of what is bothering you” she added with what Harry could almost say was a loving tone.

Knowing that this could very well be the last time that he would see Hermione, Harry took in everything about her. Her features had matured greatly in the past two years, she was now a young woman, and she looked it. She had taken to brushing her hair, trading in the former bushy look for one of straight and flowing brown hair that Harry thought looked very beautiful and was fitting for a young woman like Hermione. She had grown to a height of five feet five inches, almost identical to her best girl friend Ginny Weasley. She had also been exercising and sported a toned core with firm arms and legs. She was still as studious as ever, but since he had arrived at the Burrow, Harry had noticed that she seemed to carry some kind of emotional weight. He decided to tell Hermione what was on his mind. “After all” he thought to himself, “when has she been wrong about anything?”

“I don’t know how much I am allowed to say, but it seems that I don’t need to go looking for the Horcruxes” Harry said. Harry was surprised when Hermione didn’t ask him why, but he elected to continue. “It seems like that man with Bill,”

“You mean Sean?” Hermione interjected.

“How did you know his name?” Harry asked.

“He arrived here with Bill four days ago and Bill introduced him to Ron, and the rest of us.”
“Oh,” Harry said, “well, it seems he already went through the trouble of finding them.” Harry paused trying to evaluate any reaction coming from Hermione to this information, but he only saw a look of concern and…was that caring or even love he saw in her eyes as she gazed at him?

“So when are you leaving with him?” Hermione asked.

“How did…” Harry began before Hermione cut him off.

“Lupin let me listen to Bill explaining his plan for you, he thought that I could help the Order on this one…and I really want to. I’m sure that you will do a lot of good” Harry said, “you always have.”

He could hear Hermione start to stifle a sob; he looked over to see her holding back tears. He reached over and found that his hand was resting on top of hers, but they didn’t pull them away and then think that some awkward moment had passed…they just stayed there. “Please don’t cry Hermione,” Harry began “I only have a few days here, and I would like to see you happy for that time.”

“When are you leaving?” Hermione asked.

“Sean told me that we will be leaving the day after the wedding” Harry responded simply.

“I don’t want you to go.” Hermione began almost screaming with anger and frustration as she threw her arms around Harry. “It isn’t fair that you can’t have a life, they call you the boy who lived, so why can’t you be free to live and…” there was a pause and Hermione’s voice became calmer as she lightly pushed away from him “…love.”

She ended her thought, Harry looked at her with his emerald green eyes and tried to say in a very comforting tone “I need to do this Hermione, if Sean can do what he says he can, then I can finally destroy Voldemort and then be free to truly be the boy who lived…and you, Ron, Ginny, Neville, Hagrid, Lupin, Tonks, Luna, and all the other people I care about can finally be safe and not have to worry about threats from the Dark Lord…and we can all be free.”

“I understand Harry” Hermione said, “how long will you be gone for?” she asked.

“As long as it takes,” Harry answered honestly, “this is something that I am going to see through to the end.” Hermione was surprised by the tone of determination and resolution that Harry had in his voice.

“It’s not fair that you had to grow up so fast,” Hermione said “here you are almost seventeen years old and you’re acting like a full-grown man with real adult problems.”

“I can’t really help that,” Harry said, “but I can see this through and finish it.”

Harry stopped and Hermione just sat next to him for a few moments. Harry finally realized that Hermione had moved in closer next to him and had woven her fingers through his on their hands that had been touching. Harry tensed a bit at first with this new sensation and feeling, he had been with girls before, he had even kissed a couple of girls, but this was the first time he was ever in any kind of situation like this with Hermione. She was his friend, he kept telling himself, and she couldn’t be anything more…it was too dangerous.

All the while he was conflicting inside he couldn’t help but notice how much her features had matured and how beautiful she had become. She looked like something that he would only read about in fairy tales or other stories of mythological beauties, the kind of creatures that would drive men mad with how utterly gorgeous they were. “Harry?” she asked with a questioning tone.

“Yeah?” he replied.

“Why are you staring at me?” Harry finally realized that he had indeed been staring at the young witch with the lovely
brown hair and cinnamon eyes sitting to his right.

Harry didn’t know what to do or say, “Um, well, I uh…” he stammered out as he tried to think of exactly why he had been staring at her. He had thought of how ever since she kissed him on the cheek at the end of their fourth year of Hogwarts he had thought of her and what she meant to him. He thought of how at the end of fifth year when he had seen her paralyzed that he didn’t want to go on living if she died. He thought of how lately while he was alone in his house at Grimmauld Place he had often imagined what it would be like having her in his life as more than friends.

But, for the life of him he could not put it into words, and the fact that Hermione was now staring at him with what was at first a look of waiting for him to respond to her inquiry as to why he was staring at her, but had since evolved into one of glowering admiration was not helping his thought process. Harry’s heart began pounding in his chest so hard that he was certain that it would burst out of his chest at any moment. He wanted to tell her all that he was feeling, but he was afraid of messing up whatever he had with her now, but he also realized that there was no going back now, he was going to start being the boy who lived…right now.

“Hermione…” Harry started, and continued as he saw her turn her gaze to meet his own. “I have a confession to make, something that started more than two and a half years ago.” Harry paused not knowing how to go on, but Hermione was more than willing to coax him along.

“Yes…” Hermione said encouragingly, “Go on.”

“Hermione…” Harry started, but rather than make his own confession, there was something he needed to know, “at the end of fourth year, before I went back to the Dursleys, why did you kiss me on the cheek?”

Now it was Hermione’s turn to be cornered and not know how to respond. This was a very difficult situation for Hermione to be in, she was such a smart young woman, everything had a clear answer and she always knew it…it was her nature. But she found that she could not think of an answer to Harry’s simple question, she knew why she had done it, but wording it into a proper response was going to be difficult.

“Well,” she began “after you disappeared from the maze with Cederic, I started to fear the worst and I found that…” she paused and this time it was Harry’s turn to coax her along, and he muttered the same “yes…go on” that she had done earlier.

Hermione took a breath and then continued, “I was afraid that I would never see you again and I got to thinking about how much I lo…” Hermione paused, worried about how Harry would take it if she confessed her feelings to him now, and she quickly corrected herself, “care about you and how wonderful my life is with you in it. How you’re always there with me not because I can help you with your work but because I’m just me and that’s all I need to be with you.” Comprehension dawned on Harry the moment he heard Hermione say “lo…” “She loves me,” he thought to himself. “You still haven’t answered my question,” Hermione pouted, “why were you staring at me?” Harry, now filled with a renewed resolve but realizing that he could not put his feelings into words, paused and then lightly cupped Hermione’s chin with his index finger while placing the palm of his other hand lightly on her cheek. “Because…” Harry said “I can’t help myself.” They looked into each other’s eyes, Hermione smiled and bit her lower lip, and then Harry leaned in. Hermione realized what Harry was about to do. She turned her whole body to her left towards Harry. She placed her left leg onto the couch to allow Harry quicker and unrestricted access. As Harry leaned in closer she wrapped her arms around his neck and brought her right leg up to wrap around him and bring him to her.

Harry wrapped his arms around Hermione’s waist as their lips met, lightly at first, and then deepened into a loving kiss. Neither of them tensed, they had both wanted this for a long time. Harry wrapped his arms around her tighter and Hermione wrapped her other leg around his waist. They came in closer to each other as all the pent up emotion that they had had for more than six years came out all at once. Hermione moaned in delight as Harry deepened the kiss even further, he realized that this is what he wanted, this was what was missing from his life…this was perfection.

They came away for air about thirty seconds later and looked into each other’s eyes with their foreheads resting against each other. Both of them were breathing harder now and they couldn’t help but look at each other. At first the stare was a
little awkward as if they were wondering what just happened. But after a few seconds Hermione smiled and Harry started to crack a grin.

“I’ve wanted that for a long time now” Harry said to Hermione as she brushed some of his long hair away from his face.

“Me to” Hermione stated the best she could due to the fact that Harry had taken her breath away. She stared deeply into his emerald green eyes as she ran her fingers through his hair. Harry returned the look and a full-blown smile, the first he had shown in ages, became sprawled across his features.

“That was my first kiss” Hermione said matter-of-factly knowing that Harry had kissed two other girls before.

“But I thought you and Viktor…” Harry began.

Hermione lightly brought a finger to Harry’s lips to silence him, “we were only friends” Hermione said removing her finger, “and besides” she continued, “I could only ever talk about you.”

Harry wasn’t sure how to respond, but after that honest compliment, he decided to respond with one of his own. “When I kissed Cho,” Harry began “it wasn’t how I thought it would be because in my head I was wishing that it was you there with me under the mistletoe.”

They both stared at each other a little longer and then came together for another chaste yet passionate kiss, in front of the crackling fire, and for a brief time, everything in Harry’s life seemed perfect. For the brief time that he was kissing Hermione, the girl he now knew was his one true love, he forgot about Voldemort, he forgot about Sean and going to the monastery, for the time being he was focused only on the beautiful girl snogging him between her legs.

They came apart, Hermione kept her eyes shut taking in all that had just transpired and let out a love struck breath before opening her eyes to look at Harry, her hero and one true love. “We should be getting to bed,” Harry said, “It would look very strange if people came in to find the two of us sleeping on the couch.”

“Yeah” Hermione agreed, “I’ll see you in the morning, Sean said that I should teach you a few charms before you go.”

“I look forward to it.” Harry said. With that, they kissed good night and went to their respective rooms.

Hermione was sharing a room with Ginny and Fleur, Harry was sure that he was up in the attic like last Christmas with Ron. Harry found that he was right; he came in quietly and found a bed made for him up there. Harry let out a sigh as he made his way to where he would be sleeping.

Oddly enough, Harry found that he felt better than he ever had before. He was in love, and this time it was different, this time he knew it was for real. He settled into his bed, and for the first time in a very long time, settled into a wonderful, deep sleep, filled with wonderful dreams…dreams of Hermione Jane Granger.
Chapter 6: The Morning After

Harry had gotten to bed at about 4 AM, so it was a while before he woke up; it was about 10 AM when Ron finally came in to wake him up. “Late night last night mate?” Ron asked in his usual voice.

“Yeah” Harry replied slightly surprised to see his friend, “I had a lot to take in.”

“Bill told me that you’re going away for the summer and that all of us, even Hermione and her parents, need to go into hiding,” Ron said to Harry with an air of disbelief.

“I kind of figured that after Bill told me about my leaving” Harry answered.

“Why do we need to go into hiding?” Ron asked with a bit of disgust.

“I don’t think I can tell you,” Harry answered knowing full well that it was because Death Eaters were hunting for Harry and would think to look for him first at where his friends lived. “But you and the others are free to use my house for your shelter” Harry said.

“Thanks mate” Ron said before slapping Harry on the back. “I’ve got to get to the shop,” Ron was now working with Fred and George at Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes and was sleeping there as well, “I just wanted to stop by and say hi. You’d better get downstairs, mum is getting impatient waiting for you to have some breakfast and Hermione wants to talk to you about something as well.”

Harry tensed slightly at the mention of Hermione, last night was still fresh in his memory and he was hoping that she didn’t want to talk to him because she had decided that the night before was just a result of anxiety and the late hour and that she hoped they could still be just friends.

Harry put on his glasses and made his way downstairs, he found Mrs. Weasley making pancakes and delighted to see him up. “Did you have a good sleep?” she asked in a cheery voice.

“Yeah,” Harry answered “thanks again for letting me stay here.”

“Think nothing of it” Mrs. Weasley answered, “I just hope that we can make these next two days enjoyable for you.” Harry noticed that when she said these last words she started to stifle back cries, pretty much everyone who knew him felt like Hermione when it came to Harry and it not being fair for so much to be thrust upon him.

“Where’s everyone else?” Harry asked as he began to eat his pancakes and found no one else there.

“Well, Arthur and the twins are of course at work” Mrs. Weasley began gesturing toward the clock on the wall showing the location of all the Weasleys, “and everyone else who is staying here is outside preparing for the ceremony tomorrow.” Bill and Fleur had decided to have the wedding outdoors on the Burrow grounds, so they along with Sean, Ginny, and Hermione were now outside preparing a spot on the grounds to accommodate the guests who would be arriving tomorrow.

Harry finished his pancakes, and then excused himself, he bathed, dressed and then went outside to help the others. He found the girls were placing chairs in front of a make shift pedestal, obviously the spot where Bill and Fleur would take their vows and be pronounced man and wife. He looked and saw Bill and Sean setting up chairs, the two of them were dressed for grunt work, with short pants and white tank tops. He couldn’t help but notice Ginny and the other girls stealing glances at Sean, who apparently always wore his crucifix, and then whispered among themselves giggling. Harry looked at Bill and Sean together and couldn’t help thinking that between Sean’s crucifix and Bill’s earring and ponytail and both their physiques they looked like a pair of stylish young-adult Muggles.
“Need some help?” Harry asked Bill and Sean, not really in the mood for arranging plants and flowers.

“Sure,” Bill said pointing to a pile of folded chairs a short distance away. Harry set to work and began bringing over and setting up chairs with Bill and Sean, knowing that this was the last full day of care-free pleasure before the great unknown journey that lay ahead.

After a little while, all was ready and the group decided to take a rest, Mrs. Weasley, who had been inside putting the finishing touches on Fleur’s dress, brought out some lemonade for the workers to enjoy under the shade of a nearby tree. Fleur settled next to Bill while Ginny moved in close to Sean, Harry and Hermione sat next to each other at the end of the group, and no one could see them holding hands after they settled.

“It’s too bad that these days have to so few and far between,” Bill sighed, “sitting under the cool shade after a hard day’s work, home-made lemonade, surrounded by friends and loved ones.” He paused before finishing his thought with “you wish that they could last forever.”

“Aye,” Sean stated “but it helps you appreciate them all the more, you cannot know the sweet without experiencing the bitter…cheers me bucko” he said holding up his glass to Bill who responded in turn.

Harry turned to Hermione, who blushed a little with the memory of what had happened the last time their eyes had met. “Hermione,” he said, “this morning Ron told me that there was something you wanted to talk to me about.”

Hermione answered, “I just thought that we should get started as soon as possible on the charms Sean requested you learn.

“I can start now,” Harry responded.

“Give yourself a few minutes,” Sean retorted, “having people in your life who genuinely care for you is a great blessing…cherish the time you have with them.”

They all stayed and drank for about ten more minutes and then separated, Sean went to feed and clean the horses, with Ginny insistent on helping, Bill and Fleur went inside to see if they could help Mrs. Weasley, while Harry and Hermione went off a short distance to practice the charms. “Now then,” Hermione said, “are you ready to begin?”

“Yeah,” Harry replied, “let’s do this.” Hermione first taught Harry the “occulus repairo” charm to fix his glasses, then using an enchanted skeleton bone that Madam Pomfrey had given her upon learning of her desire to become a healer, she taught Harry the charms for mending broken bones.

After a few hours, Harry was satisfied that he had all the charms right and would be able to perform them if and when needed. “One thing,” Hermione said, “you need to remember that when you perform the mendo charms for bruises and broken bones you will hurt for a few minutes and need to wait about an hour before using the injured part again.”

“Hermione,” Harry said after he had processed this latest information, “there is something I need to ask you.”

“Yes Harry,” Hermione responded inquisitively and with a hint of concern. “Last night,” Harry began, “by the fire, was that for real or just because of what is coming up?”

Hermione thought the bashful look on Harry’s face at bringing up what they had shared the night before was simply adorable. “Let me put it this way Harry,” Hermione said, and with that she walked up to him, wrapped her arms around his neck and brought his lips down to hers in a tender and passionate kiss. When they came apart, Harry smiled at Hermione causing her to bite her lower lip and blush.

“Look at that over there,” Hermione said pointing to the horizon and the beautiful sunset that highlighted it. “Wow” Harry said upon seeing it, he and Hermione were now standing side by side with Harry holding Hermione close to him. “This will be my last day here with just you,” Harry said, “would you like to sit with me and watch the sunset?” “I can’t think of anything that I would rather do” Hermione replied with sincerity.
The two of them settled onto the ground with Hermione resting her head on Harry’s shoulder and Harry bringing his hand to hold Hermione’s. They just sat and watched the sunset, content to let their actions speak for themselves.

“When did this happen?” Harry wondered aloud.

“Hmm?” Hermione questioned as she ran her fingers through his long black hair.

“When did we fall in love?” Harry clarified as he did the same to Hermione’s long beautiful hair.

“I told you that it started for me that time at Fourth year when I realized how much you mean to me” Hermione said. “The real question is when did you fall in love with me?”

Harry had been thinking about this but had not been able to come to a distinct conclusion. “I’m still trying to figure that out,” Harry replied honestly, “but I think that the important thing is that I have accepted it now and that we can have at least today to be together and enjoy it.”

Hermione sighed her approval and leaned up against Harry’s chest, she turned her head to look into Harry’s eyes and then spoke to him. “Harry.”

“Yeah?”

“Do you believe in destiny?” Harry had always thought of his destiny as being the inevitable confrontation with Voldemort and other bleak things…he had never thought of true love…his true love…being a part of that.

Harry was still lost in his thoughts when he and Hermione heard Mrs. Weasley call them in for supper. “Let’s go” Harry said gently to his one true love, and they got up and walked back to the Burrow, hand in hand.
Chapter 7: The Wedding

Harry and Hermione had gotten to bed early the previous evening because they knew Harry had to be rested for his departure the following morning. When Harry awoke for breakfast he found Bill and Sean eating their porridge at the table and Fleur noticeably absent. “This is ridiculous” Bill was muttering to himself more than anyone else, “who the heck started this stupid tradition of not seeing the bride the day of the wedding?”

“I believe that it was the ancient Hebrews” Sean replied.

“You know everything don’t you?” Bill inquired.

“Hardly” Sean simply said.

“Good morning Bill, Sean” Harry said to them as he came up.

“Morning” they both said.

“Mum prepared some porridge for us over there” Bill said gesturing toward the pot on the oven burner. “All the women are upstairs helping Fleur get ready for the wedding,” Bill continued, “and they won’t let us up there.”

“It’s tradition.” Harry stated simply as he got himself a bowl of porridge and joined Bill and Sean.

“Where is everybody else?” Harry asked wondering about the people who were there last night and all the other guests that he figured would be there.

“Most of them will be apparating here in about three hours,” Bill said glancing at the clock on the wall.

A few moments after this Ron and the twins apparated into the room, “Hi ya Harry” Ron greeted as they came in dressed in their best dress robes. Harry realized that he needed to go change into his dress robes and Bill and Sean went to do the same as they finished their breakfast.

Bill was correct in his estimation, because for the next two hours different people were apparating onto the Burrow grounds where Charlie, Percy, Fred and George, Ron, and Ginny waited to greet the guests and show them to the prepared area. Harry was inside in his dress robes, he did not want to attract attention to himself and take attention away from the bride and groom. He agreed to come out with the groom and his best man. He wondered how Sean would be dressed, seeing as how he was a Muggle, he wondered if he would wear a tuxedo or other kind of formal Muggle clothing, or if he would just try to blend in by wearing dress robes.

He was soon shown his answer when Sean came down the stairs. His hair was in his usual spiked up crew cut; he was clean-shaven and dressed in what were strange clothes to Harry. He had black dress shoes and socks on his feet and a kilt in the Clan O’Sullivan pattern, tucked into the kilt was a long sleeved white dress shirt and over that he had a dark blue dress coat with shiny brass buttons.

“This is one of my traditions” Sean said to Harry when he could see him trying to decipher why he was dressed like he was. “I was willing to wear the dress robes you wizards wear, but Bill wouldn’t have it.”

“I think that looks really cool” Harry said.

“Thanks” Sean answered simply.

“Where’s Bill?” Harry asked.
“He and his dad are having a little chat before the ceremony starts.”

Up in Bill’s room, Mr. Weasley was helping him straighten up his robes in front of the mirror in the room. Bill had his long hair tied back in his usual ponytail and even had his dragon fang earring on, because Fleur liked it so much.

“How do I look?” Bill asked his dad.

“You look great son” Mr. Weasley answered and then sighed as he looked at his own reflection next to his son in the mirror.

“I am very proud of you son” Mr. Weasley began, “but if you will take some marital advice from someone who has been on that road for a little while. Just remember that marriage is a compromise and that the best thing you can do most of the time is to simply listen.”

Bill turned to face his father, a look of content on his face as he placed a hand on his father’s shoulder. “Thanks for everything dad,” he began “the only thing I hope with all this is that I can be at least half the husband and father you are” Bill said with feeling before embracing his father.

After a minute or two, the father and his eldest son came apart and faced each other for a moment before Mr. Weasley spoke, “let’s you get on with the rest of your life.”

Bill nodded and they continued downstairs and found Harry and Sean waiting for them in the main room. Harry and Mr. Weasley went ahead to be seated, leaving Bill and Sean to wait a few minutes before going out themselves. Fleur was upstairs with her mother, and the fact that she was so close to him was egging Bill to no end.

“Well” Sean began, “as you well know I have absolutely no advice that I could offer you in this matter,” he paused with an effect that obviously said “celibate monk”, “all I can say is to use the same care and devotion in this as you use in everything…and then some.”

“Let’s go then,” Bill said, Sean nodded and they made their journey out to the designated spot. The crowd was on their feet as the groom and his best man made their way to where an elderly wizard dressed in a special robe stood to perform the ceremony. They took their places, Bill at the center and Sean to his side.

After a few minutes, the bride and her mother made their way to the steeple, her beauty inspired gasps from those assembled. Fleur in all her Veela beauty was dressed in a gorgeous white wedding dress; complete with the goblin-made tiara Mrs. Weasley had given her for the wedding. The dress accentuated her curves and brought out her fair skin. A veil had been added to the dress, it only partly obscured her beautiful face. As she approached, her father took over for her mother as he went to give the bride away. Bill and Sean had turned to face the arriving duo, Sean remained in his place and stood straight and tall as if at attention for some kind of military ceremony. Bill was trying to do the same, but anyone with their eyes on him could tell that he was slouching slightly.

Harry had found a seat between Hermione and Ron and was now standing with the rest of those assembled. Hermione had reached over and taken Harry’s hand, Ron hadn’t noticed because he was fixated on the approaching bride. Fleur arrived next to Bill, who took her hand in his as they kneeled before the elder wizard who began the ceremony.

“Those assembled here are gathered to witness the solemn union of this man and this woman in holy matrimony.” As he spoke Bill kept trying to look straight ahead but found himself sneaking glances at Fleur, and he was flattered to see that she was doing the same. “Who comes to give the bride away?”

“Lieu” Fleur’s father replied with a slightly choked-up tone to his voice.

“William Arthur Weasley,” the elder wizard said to Bill, “do you take this woman, Fleur Delacour to be your sworn bride to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in richer or poorer, for better or worse, in this life and the next?”
Harry noticed something interesting in that the elder never said, “til death do you part,” Hermione had also noticed and had given Harry’s hand a squeeze which Harry returned. “I do” Bill answered.

The elder then turned to Fleur and repeated the phrase, to which she also responded in the affirmative. “Will the best man please present the rings?” Sean walked up to Bill and Fleur and handed each of them a ring.

As they took the rings, the elder wizard made an announcement, “these rings, once applied cannot be removed, they are made from the same gold, and therefore will always be a part of each other. The wearers have now sworn to take on the same oath, to be together forever, in this life and the next.” At the conclusion of this, Fleur placed the ring in her hand onto Bill’s finger and said “with zis ring, I zee wed.”

Bill then placed the ring in his hand onto Fleur’s finger and said, “With this ring I thee wed.”

“I now pronounce you forever wed” the elder wizard stated pulling out his wand and casting a charm on the couples rings. “You may kiss the bride” with this Bill reached out and removed the veil obscuring Fleur’s face, he looked her in the eyes for a few seconds to see the thrilled look on her face before kissing her tenderly and officially proclaiming their marriage to the world.

The couple marched away to the house and Mrs. Weasley got to the front to announce the gathering a few meters away with refreshments and music and dancing for the assembled guests and adding that the newlyweds would be arriving shortly. Sure enough, in a few moments Bill and Fleur Weasley arrived and began accepting congratulations from the various guests.

To Bill’s delight and Sean’s chagrin, Bill received many questions about the best man from many of the female guests such as “is he married?” or “does he like older women?” or even “would he consider a quick one or is he waiting for marriage first

Mr. Weasley got up to make a toast and to begin the ceremony, the various guests reached for their drinking glasses to toast the bride and groom.

“Welcome” Mr. Weasley began, “I know that it is tradition for the father of the bride to be the master of ceremonies. But since the bride and groom were insistent on having the wedding here at our humble home and Jacques doesn’t feel comfortable with his command of the English language, he asked me to handle the position.”

Mr. Weasley then raised his glass and began “I would therefore like to propose a toast to Bill and Fleur, may their lives be long and their marriage a blissful experience they will always treasure.” A chorus of here here’s echoed through the Burrow grounds as those assembled raised their glasses and joined in the toast.

“While he did not feel comfortable with being the master of ceremonies,” Mr. Weasley continued after the toast, “Jacques did prepare some words of encouragement for his daughter and new son-in-law. He had originally written them out and asked me to read them, but gratefully now, he can say them in person, and my son Bill’s best man, Sean O’Sullivan, will translate.”

After Mr. Weasley finished, Sean, who had moved next to Fleur’s father Jacques, said something to Jacques and the two of them came to where Mr. Weasley had been standing. Jacques would say a few words and then pause for Sean to translate

“This a very proud moment for my wife and I” Sean translated, “when we are seeing our oldest child, our beautiful daughter Fleur given in holy matrimony to a wonderful young man.” Fleur reacted before the others since she could understand the French, and she was stifling tears of joy.

“I am very proud to entrust the bride, my beloved daughter Fleur, to the care of this wonderful young man, Bill Weasley. You have my blessing, and my most sincere wishes for happiness and prosperity.” Sean concluded translating to a chorus of love-struck sighs and awns from the females in attendance.

“Well now” Mr. Weasley said, “please enjoy the music and feel free to enjoy dancing, we would like to start with the bride
and groom enjoying the first dance.” Harry’s gift for the wedding had been to hire the Weird Sisters to play the wedding, they began to play and Bill and Fleur enjoyed their dance to the soft and romantically melodic music.

Hermione and Harry watched the couple enjoy their dance, both of them were imagining what it would be like if things were different. They were imagining being married themselves after graduation, not having to worry about the dark lord or some mysterious guardian, they were wishing that they could be free to love and go through the normal motions of two people who had found each other and wanted to spend forever together.

The Weird Sisters ended the song and the festivities resumed with some people dancing to the music and others enjoying some of the food and drink that was provided (Bill had provided Sean with a liter of Canada Dry). Fleur and Bill were accepting congratulations from several of the guests when Sean came up to offer his own.

“Congratulations” Sean said, first to Bill in English and then to Fleur in French.

“Thanks” Bill said.

He was followed by Fleur saying “Merci beaucoup Sean” before kissing him on each of his cheeks.

“Sean,” Bill said to his friend, “I was wondering if you would do me a favor.”

“What” Sean asked with curiosity.

“It would mean a lot to my sister if you would dance with her.”

“It would?” Sean asked with apparent disbelief.

“Oh yeah,” Bill said as if it was the most obvious thing in the world, “she fancies you.”

“As does every other woman here” Fleur added in French.

Having lived in a monastery since he was five and only leaving to kill vampires or other demons, he didn’t really know anything about women or how to notice when they thought he was attractive. He realized that Ginny had insisted on spending time with him when she had the opportunity, such as when he would go to take care of the horses, and that it would be a nice way to repay his friend and his family.

“Alright,” Sean said, “I’ll ask your sister for a dance.”

“Thanks Sean” Bill said, “it will really make her day, or lifetime for that matter.”

“We’ll see,” Sean ended as he walked off to find Ginny. He found her sitting off to the side and caught her stealing a glance at him, after Bill’s announcement to him he was becoming better at seeing when women were staring at him…and he realized that almost all of them were doing it all the time.

Ginny gasped when she saw that Sean, dressed in his Celtic clothing making him look like some kind of knight or romantic figure from a fairy tale or similar kind of story book, the man she described as gorgeous only days before and who she thought made every man she had ever laid eyes on, even Harry, look like the winner of the Ugliest Man in the World contest, was walking right toward her.

Sean knelt in front of Ginny and took her hand in his “Ginerva Weasley,” he began bringing her hand to his lips, “would you honor me with a dance” he finished kissing her hand after the last words.

Ginny couldn’t speak for what seemed like hours, she was taken aback by this gallant cavalier gentleman, the kind of man every girl dreams of having sweep her off her feet, coming to her, of all the other women there who were swooning over him, and asked her to dance. “Uh,” Ginny began struggling to get out one simple three-letter word, “y-y-y-” she
stammered before blurting out a fast “yes!”

Sean was a little surprised that she said yes, but he stood on his feet and offered her his arm, which she took hurriedly and jubilantly. The song that was playing was slow, but not so slow to be an awkward dance. Sean and Ginny went to the area in front of the band and began to dance slowly. Ginny wanted to take full advantage of this opportunity, so she wrapped her arms around Sean’s neck, causing Sean to instinctively place his arms around her waist.

“Harry look!” Hermione squealed in delight from where they stood by Bill and Fleur as they were offering them their congratulations.

Harry turned to see Ginny dancing very closely with Sean. Harry was thrilled to see Ginny with Sean, ever since he had learned of Voldemort manipulating him to be with Ginny and him realizing that he was in love with Hermione, he worried about Ginny being heartbroken. But seeing her with Sean, Harry knew that she would be just fine.

Ginny wanted to talk to Sean, but she had no idea what to say, she thought of the first thing that came to her mind. “Does it hurt when you do the splits?” she immediately wished that she could take back what she said and ask something different of him.

But Sean answered her with his usual monotone, which assured Ginny that she had not destroyed this opportunity, “of course” Sean started, “but the point of it is to learn to will yourself through the pain.”

Ginny wanted to keep the conversation going, so she asked something about the most obvious feature of Sean at this point. “Why are you dressed like that?” she asked referring to his Celtic clothes.

“These clothes are traditional of my ancestry, the pattern on the kilt is that of the Celtic clan from which my ancestors come, and the coat and shoes make it formal.” Sean finished with a tone that highlighted his thick accent and conveyed the pride he felt in his heritage.

Ginny looked at Sean with a very dreamy expression as the music stopped and she regretfully let go of Sean. But before she could thank him for making her day with his gallantry and asking her to dance, Sean spoke to her.

“Would you like to experience something else Celtic?” he asked her with a hint of longing.

“Sure” she responded

“Excuse me for a moment” Sean politely stated.

“He is so cavalier” Ginny thought to herself as she nodded for him to go on.

Sean walked over to where the Weird Sisters were sitting and playing and said something to them. Ginny couldn’t hear what was being said, but by the nods that Sean was exchanging with the musicians she figured that whatever he was asking could be accommodated. Harry, Hermione, Bill, and Fleur did not want to go and dance themselves because they wanted to watch Ginny and Sean…the two couples held hands and watched with happy feelings as they saw the little sister and the cavalier.

Sean came back to Ginny and took her hands in his, “just follow my lead,” he told her, “and you will be fine.” The Weird Sisters changed their instruments and prepared to play. A few moments later they began, there was a moment of pause as the guests were unfamiliar with the traditional Celtic music that was now being played and cleared out from the dance area. But this was the music that Sean loved, and now he would show his best friend’s sister the dance that accompanied it.

They began to dance as the sisters played fiddle, bodhran, a harp, and a Celtic whistle to complete the song. Later they began to spin in the middle of the dance area as the music came to that point. After a few moments, the waltz part commenced again until a little later when the Sisters hit the last few bars and Sean brought Ginny down into a low dip to end the dance. Ginny was wearing a very modest dress, so the dip didn’t reveal too much of her young and slender body,
Mr. and Mrs. Weasley looked on, with the rest of the guests, at the two people in the dance area. Ginny was still down in the dip, and Sean was very, there was no better adjective to describe him, cavalier. He held Ginny in a position that would send any parent into convulsions. But Mrs. Weasley couldn’t help but turn to her husband and say, “don’t they look wonderful together, Sean is such a wonderful young man.”

“If there was any way for them to be together,” Arthur began, “I would give them my blessing in a heart beat.”

Sean was amazed at how well Ginny had followed his lead during the song and brought her up after a few moments, it was obvious she was still stuck in her euphoria.

“Are you alright?” Sean asked after a moment.

“I have never been better in my entire life” Ginny said to him in as excited a tone as she could muster after having her breath taken away.

“You are a very good dancer, thanks very much for the dance” Sean said, “I had never danced with a woman before.”

“You can’t be serious.” Ginny said with undisguised surprise and astonishment, “Aye” Sean responded, as he took her hand one last time and brought it to his lips before escorting her back to her seat.

“Wow” was all Bill could say after Sean escorted Ginny back to her seat where he gave her a respectful bow before taking his leave. “I never knew Sean could dance like that” Bill ended.

“I think it was great” Hermione retorted, “with all that’s happened, Ginny deserved that perfect dance,” the rest of them agreed with Hermione.

“I know that we won’t be able to top that” Harry began, “but Hermione, would you dance with me?”

“What?” Hermione asked.

“Second year” he said.

“That was when I first fell in love with you. When I saw you paralyzed in the hospital wing, I felt lower than I ever had before. And then when you came into the Great Hall and gave me my first hug, I never looked at you the same way again.”

Hermione leaned back against Harry, and then Harry spoke again, “hey, look at that.” Harry gestured towards where Ginny was sitting, and Hermione turned to see Ginny surrounded by several females who were enthusiastically asking her questions and begging for information.

“They must be asking her about Sean” Harry said, “his fan club makes mine at Hogwarts look like nothing.”
“Can you blame them” Hermione said, “he’s a total dreamboat…but don’t worry, I prefer you.” They smiled at Ginny who smiled back at them.

“If you fell for me back in second year,” Hermione spoke to Harry, “then why did it take four years for you to do anything?” she asked him with a mixture of honest inquiring and regret at how little time they would now have together.

“Lots of reasons” Harry began, “Third year there was the whole deal with Sirius, fourth year I was infatuated with Cho, trying to convince myself that you and I were just friends. Fifth year when things fell apart with Cho, I started having my dreams and was wrapped up with the DA. And then sixth year I thought you and Ron were going to become an item, and Voldemort was manipulating me to pursue Ginny.”

Harry concluded his explanation and then let silence come back into this great moment he was having with his true love Hermione. Hermione had been pondering what Harry had said, wishing that these things were different, wishing that they could have more time and that Harry could truly be the boy who lived, and not just the boy who survived to hide.

Then Hermione realized something, “Harry” she asked.

“How?” he responded.

“Did you ever wonder why Voldemort never tried to put a rift between you and me last year?”

Harry was slightly taken aback when he realized that Hermione had been thinking the same thing that had been occupying his mind for the past while when he was at Grimmauld Place.

“Yeah, I have wondered that.”

“Then it would interest you to know that while you were going out with Ginny…” Hermione paused “I was extremely jealous.”

Then it dawned on Harry, Voldemort knew that he was in love with Hermione, even before he acknowledged it, and now he was more determined than ever to vanquish the Dark Lord once and for all.

As the song ended, Harry and Hermione did not come apart, but stayed for a moment just enjoying the feel of each other and wanting to preserve the moment, they didn’t know when the next one like this would be. Harry and Hermione stayed together and danced until the ceremonies were concluded about an hour and a half later.

“The Delacours and Weasleys” Mr. Weasley began, “would like to thank all of you for coming out,” Mr. Weasley stated as he began to bring the ceremony to a close. “The bride and groom will now take goodbyes as they prepare to depart for their honeymoon.” Bill and Fleur had already lined up and were accepting congratulations and fond farewells.

Sean made it a point to be the last one to approach the bride and groom, as he did, Fleur kissed him on both of his cheeks and spoke to him in French. “Bill is so very fortunate to have a friend like you” she began, “and I look forward to enjoying association with you for many years to come.”

“Likewise” was all Sean could say…and he did so in French.

“Thanks for being here Sean” Bill said as he extended his hand.

“Thanks for having me” Sean replied as he shook his friend’s hand.

“Thanks also for dancing with my little sister,” Bill continued, “I don’t know if you noticed, but she’s been on cloud nine since then.”

“It was the least I could do, your sister is a wonderful young girl.”
After saying this, Sean produced two items in his hands, “my gifts” he said. The one on the left he gave to Fleur, it was a medallion with a beautiful jade stone at the end in the shape of a clover.

“It’s beautiful,” Fleur said in French.

“That’s Jade” Sean said pointing to the stone, “in the shape of a shamrock, it is said to bring the wearer good fortune, which is what I wish for you and Bill.”

Fleur blurted out another “merci beaucaux” to Sean and kissed him on both of his cheeks again.

The object in Sean’s right hand he gave to Bill, it was a .44 caliber revolver, something Bill had never seen before. He looked expectantly at Sean waiting for him to shed some light on the object in his hand.

“It’s loaded with silver bullets” Sean said to Bill “this is for the next time you see that wolf.” Sean ended, as the awkward look on Bill’s face didn’t change.

Bill then told Sean the reason, “I don’t know what this is or how to use it” Bill stated matter of factly.

Sean paused to think for a moment then gave the best brief explanation he could think of “Hold it with the barrel” he pointed to the end of the barrel “forward, grip it like this” he added gripping the butt with his middle ring and pinky fingers and his index finger on the trigger, “and then squeeze.” Sean finished his explanation and then asked Bill to hold the gun as he had shown him, first putting the safety on. After Bill had done it satisfactorily, Sean added one last word, “only use it on a werewolf and never even hold it unless in that situation…it will kill anything you shoot with it.”

Sean paused to look at his friend who held his gift up and eyed it with wonder, “a real Muggle weapon” he thought to himself, “and it will kill a werewolf…it will kill Greyback.

Sean broke the silence, “May God go with you both in your new life,” Sean finished before Bill brought him into a masculine embrace.

“If you need to get in touch with any of the Order of the Phoenix, I had Lupin take Regal to 12 Grimmauld Place after the meeting, and he will be sending you a note when they start meeting there” Bill said to Sean.

Harry had agreed to let the Weasleys and Grangers use his house as a shelter for the summer, with the promise that they care for Hedwig in his absence. In the Order of St. George they used falcons to communicate, Bill and the rest of the Phoenix members felt this would be the best way to communicate since the Death Eaters would be looking for owls. Sean had a Lanner Flacon named Regal, which he named Regal because of the majesty that seemed to surround him. “I understand,” Sean said, “all is ready, you go and enjoy your week together without worries.”

With that the bride and groom bid one final fond goodbye as Fleur turned her back to the clamoring females and prepared to toss the bouquet. As they all jockeyed for position, Fleur tossed it up in the air and it came down into the hands of one of the guests who was a fairly large woman with many ugly features who had now been given a glower of hope for an otherwise bleak future.

Bill then prepared to toss the garder, and as he did he realized that there weren’t nearly as many single men there as there were single women. He tossed it and it fell into the hands of Sean O’Sullivan. Sean knew the tradition of slipping the garder onto the leg of the woman who caught the bouquet, and he approached the woman with a bow and then after kissing her hand simply said, “may I do the honors milady?” The woman nearly fainted with joy from this and managed a nod, with that he slipped the garder onto her leg, and she was thrilled to see that there was no apprehension in Sean or dread at what he was doing, he finished and then thanked her for allowing him to complete the task.

This last gesture sent all the females into squeals seeing how cavalier the dreamy best man was to all women. Bill’s last thought before he and Fleur proceeded into the carriage that would take them to the boat to the honeymoon place,
which they decided would be the South of France, was how if Sean was ever released from the Order of St. George he would have women breaking down his door.

After all the guests had gone clean up began, Harry, Hermione, Ginny, and Ron began transfiguring the chairs back into walnuts while Charlie, Percy, and the twins began to gather up the leftover food and drink. Sean had meant to help, but he was still shocked to see them changing the chairs into nuts, and then seeing Ron eat a couple of them, and then seeing the others conjure up containers out of nowhere to store the food and drink.

“Hey,” Ginny said lightly shaking his shoulder.

“What?” Sean questioned after being brought to reality.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Sean responded, “this is just all so new to me. I have never seen this sort of thing before, all Dumbledore would do is say an incantation or something simple…nothing like this.”

“You knew Dumbledore?” Ginny asked Sean with awe streaming across her face.

“Aye,” Sean said, “Dumbledore would visit the organization I am affiliated with and would ask us to work with him and he would help us out.” Sean paused then gave a sigh “He was a good man, I was sorry to hear of his death.”

Ginny didn’t really know what to say, she had a million questions rolling through her mind all at once. She was however broken out of her thoughts when Charlie found her and Sean and said that they were done and they go inside now. Sean went off to prepare the horses and Ginny followed Charlie and the other Weasleys back to the Burrow, night had fallen and they knew that Mrs. Weasley would be beside herself with Bill’s leaving and the knowledge of Harry departing in the morning.

Harry and Hermione had stayed behind to look at the stars, “they’re very beautiful” Hermione said as she moved next to Harry and moved his arm to rest around her shoulders as she leaned her head onto Harry’s chest.

“I know,” Harry replied, “the stars really are great out here where there aren’t any street lights.”

Hermione smiled and tilted Harry’s head so that he could see into her eyes. “I wasn’t talking about the stars,” she said with a grin, “I was talking about your eyes.”

Harry grinned at Hermione and then moved his lips to hers as they put their arms around each other. They came apart for air, and then Harry spoke, “it was a nice wedding wasn’t it?”

“Ever since I was a little girl” Hermione began, “I dreamed of what my own wedding would be like, and I hope it is like Bill and Fleur’s…except for the bride and groom will be different and Ron will most likely be your best man.”

Harry smiled; the fact that Hermione had implied that he would be the groom at her wedding was not lost on him. “You want me to be the groom.” Harry stated with no tone of question in his voice. Hermione would have smiled at this, but she knew full well that he was leaving with Sean in the morning and that she may very well never see him again. She was determined to make the most of this night with Harry, she would not regret anything, and she would ensure that he would leave knowing that she loved him and would be waiting for him.

“Harry” she said in an almost deathly soft voice, “this could be the last time that we…”

She stopped as Harry gently placed a finger on her lips to silence her. “Don’t talk like that Hermione” Harry took his finger away from her lips, “I’ll be coming back, if for no other reason than for you…I have too much to live for now.” As Harry ended this he took Hermione’s hand and placed it on his chest and then took her other hand in his, “I love you” he said clearly and distinctly.
Tears were welling up in her eyes as she stared into his emerald green eyes and could see nothing but honesty and sincerity. She blinked, letting the tears slide down her face as she tightened her hold on him and said in an elated tone “I am so in love with you Harry James Potter.” And with this she closed the gap between them, pressing her lips against his in a very passionate open-mouth kiss that took both their breaths away.

They would kiss and then both open their mouths against each other to take in air, then they would resume their private goodbye. With each kiss, Hermione felt that she would melt right there in Harry’s arms, and Harry felt that he had at last filled the void in his life…he had found the missing part of his soul and was now snogging her and being snogged himself in return. Harry held Hermione and then got down on his knees, gently placing Hermione on her back on the ground. The two of them did not break their long open-mouthed kissing until it was getting to the point that Harry knew he could no longer control himself…he broke the kiss.

Hermione moaned in complaint and tried to pull Harry down to her, but Harry didn’t budge. “I can’t control myself any longer” Harry confessed, “if I keep going we will end up doing something neither of us are ready for.” Hermione nodded in understanding as Harry helped her up to her feet and placed a quick kiss on her mouth. “We should be getting back,” Harry said “I want to say goodbye to the Weasleys and I don’t know how many of them will be awake or here to see me off.”

Hermione was weeping, “you shouldn’t have to be leaving,” she sobbed into his chest. Harry held her there and knew he had to be strong…for the both of them.

“I have to do this” Harry paused after saying this, “I will not fail, and I will come back to you. But until then...” As Harry said this he began feeling around in his pocket at the going away present, but he could not figure out how to give it to her or what to say.

“What?” Hermione asked Harry with genuine curiosity. Harry backed off giving her the present at the moment, but chose to say something.

“I just want to be sure that you know that I will be thinking about you and hoping to be back with you soon.”

“And I will be waiting for you when,” Hermione emphasized ‘when’ “you get back.”

“Thank you” Harry said, “for everything.”

They kissed one last time, a long, love-filled, passionate kiss. “I love you Hermione Jane Granger” Harry said to her.

“I love you Harry James Potter” Hermione answered back. They then made their way back to the Burrow, hand in hand, not caring who knew what had happened.
Chapter 8: The Departure...The Beginning

The night before had been one of grief and anxiety, the moment Harry and Hermione entered the Burrow, Sean turned to the Weasleys and to Lupin and Tonks, who had returned to say farewell, and said "I will leave you to say your goodbyes to Harry," then took his leave and went up to his room to make final preparations for the journey in the morning. Harry had said heartfelt goodbyes to Charlie and the twins, thanking them for all their help; he shook hands with Percy who wished him well. Then he moved onto Ginny who he hugged tightly to him, she was like his little sister and he knew she would miss him, they came apart and he kissed her on the cheek.

Ron came up, and for the first time Harry could remember, he saw tears in his eyes, "come back safely mate" Ron choked out, "you wouldn’t want my life to get lonely and boring would you?" Harry chuckled at this and hugged Ron, he then moved onto Lupin who looked at him with a very loving and concerned expression as he brought him to himself with an emb

"Listen to Sean" Lupin said slightly choked up but with resolution to Harry, “and you will be able to defeat Voldemort and end all this once and for all.”

Harry nodded as Lupin released him, Tonks kissed him on the cheek and said “take care Harry, I would like you to attend our wedding once Remus commits.”

Harry chuckled again at this, and moved onto Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, who gave him strong parental embraces and wishes for the best, thanking him for the use of his house. Harry then went to the last person there, his beloved Hermione Granger, he was thinking of merely kissing her cheek and saying goodbye, but was pleasantly surprised when Hermione pulled him in for a passionate five-second kiss on the lips.

Harry took one last look at the group there; Mrs. Weasley was leaning against her husband and holding back tears, as was Tonks as she leaned against her Lupin. Harry took one last look and bid them good night and goodbye. He knew he would need to be well rested, so he went straight to bed and drank a potion he had received from Madam Pomfrey at the end of sixth year for in case he started having trouble sleeping. The potion worked well and quickly, and Harry had quickly drifted off into a deep and dreamless sleep.

The next thing he knew, he could feel a hand shaking him awake, he awoke and reached for his glasses, putting them on, he saw the figure of Sean O’Sullivan crouched down next to his bed.

“It’s time.” Sean said in a no-nonsense tone. Harry had been anticipating this day for sometime now, and now that it was here, he had mixed emotions. He was eager to get the process going and to learn how to defeat Voldemort. But on the other hand, he was a little nervous and reluctant about the whole thing, he had made fairly detailed plans for his summer and possibly year, and in one day they had been completely dashed.

As his eyes adjusted to the dim light he realized something different about Sean, he was fully armed. He had on a pair of black pants and a black tank top, both of which tightly hugged his skin, and his crucifix hanging from around his neck, there were a pair of 24 inch double-edged swords patterned after the Roman Galdius strapped to his back. On each side of his chest he had sheathes that would snap shut, and each contained a large knife with a 12-inch long and four inch wide blade, a metal knuckle guard extending from the hilt, and empty slots along the same side of the blade...“like teeth” Harry thought. He noticed a sort of crossbow strapped onto his left forearm with the sides folded inward, and lastly a hard capsule-shaped container just above his rear, the top was open and Harry could see several straight silver arrows.

“The horses are prepared and waiting outside” Sean stated in a voice that suggested he had been up for a while, “I will leave you to change your clothes, it is important that we move out as soon as possible...take only your wand, you will not need anything else.” Harry nodded to show he understood, and Sean took his leave. Harry dressed and began to start towards the door, careful not to awaken Ron who was still sound asleep.
“Goodbye Ron,” Harry said quietly to his sleeping friend, “thanks for all the good times.” Harry knew that things would never be the same, whatever would happen, whatever this new training was going to do, nothing would be the same. He exited the room and was about to leave the house when he realized that there was one last thing he needed to do.

He moved silently towards the door to Ginny’s room and, very quietly, opened it. Ginny and Hermione were still asleep, “Goodbye Ginny” Harry whispered to the sleeping red head before pausing to look at the reason for his detour…the beautiful witch with the captivating brown hair and eyes, his true love, Hermione Granger.

His eyes quickly found the nightstand next to where Hermione was sleeping and he put a case containing the golden object he had acquired from Gringotts and a note down there. “What are you doing here?” Harry heard a familiar voice say to him from behind. He turned around to see Hermione sleepily staring at him from her bed. “Thought you would come in here like a thief in the night and leave without even saying goodbye?” Hermione’s tone cut through Harry like a bucket of ice water, and he wondered what he could say to get her to stop being angry.

“You’re leaving.” Hermione said without question.

“Sean’s waiting outside with the horses,” Harry answered simply. “I just wanted to leave a couple of things with you, I didn’t know you would wake up.” Harry said these words with a tone that suggested that he was trying to lighten up the mood, but that he was inadequate to do it.

“Well,” Hermione began, “I’m awake now, so what are you going to do?”

Harry had not expected this, he paused, and then he reached over to the nightstand to get the note and bracelet. “Here” Harry said gently as he placed the two items into Hermione’s hands. She looked at them not knowing what to think or do. “Go ahead and read the note,” Harry said, “it explains the other item.” Hermione rubbed some of the sleep out of her eyes and then read the note.

**Hermione:**

When you read this, I will have left with the Muggle. I want you to know that from the moment we first met, I have had strong feelings for you. It wasn’t until later on in life that I realized that these feelings went much deeper than friendship. I love you, and I want to be with you forever, that is why I have to go. I only hope that this gift will help you through the time we are apart. It was in my parent’s vault at Gringott’s, I noticed it there on a trip I took in preparation to go looking for the Horcruxes. Lupin told me that it was a present that my Dad gave to my Mum when they fell in love…and now I want to give it to you. Remember me fondly Hermione; and I will come back, if for no other reason, I will come back for you.

Love,

Harry

Tears were welling up in Hermione’s eyes, she now realized just how much she meant to Harry. She now knew that his leaving for this unknown end was absolutely necessary and that she was a motivation for it. Harry had one last thing to do before he left and handed Hermione the case he had put the going away present inside. “Open it” he said calmly to Hermione who did so. Inside the box she found a bracelet made of solid gold, it was at least half an inch think and a full inch wide and Hermione could see her reflection in it.

“It’s beautiful,” she said to Harry as tears began brimming in her eyes.

Harry could not stand to see his beloved Hermione Granger cry. He began to wipe away her tears and endeavored to speak. “Hermione…” he began but was cut off by Hermione pulling him down to her for one last heated kiss.

They came apart after about twenty seconds when Hermione said, “you shouldn’t keep your new teacher waiting.”

“I love you” Harry responded.

“I love you to” Hermione responded before they came together for a brief but loving kiss.
“I will come back to you,” Harry said with that new determination and resolution that Hermione had noticed in his voice.

“I know” she answered quickly before she would start to cry, “go,” was the last word she said before Harry nodded and was

Harry came outside and found Sean holding the horses and straightening the robe he was now wearing over his weapons. “Do you need help mounting the horse?” Sean questioned.

“No, I’ll be alright” Harry answered.

“You will follow me, and pay attention, your training starts from this moment onward” Sean stated in his no-nonsense Irish accented monotone. Harry nodded in understanding and, with some difficulty, mounted the horse Sean had provided for him.

Sean was preparing to mount his horse when he heard something he had not expected, his own name being called. “Sean!” the familiar voice of Ginny Weasley belted out from the doorway.

“Ginerva?” Sean said “what are you doing up and about, you should rest.”

“I just wanted to say goodbye,” Ginny said as she ran to Sean and hugged him tightly. Ginny came up to just under Sean’s chin, and Sean stiffed when she hugged him, the only contact he had had with women since he was orphaned and before Fleur, Ginny, and Mrs. Weasley was when he had killed female vampires.

He had no idea how to react to this, but his reflexes kicked in. He put his arm around her and spoke, “goodbye Ginerva” Sean said quietly, “be a good girl and help your family, I wish you the best in your schooling and your future.”

Sean finished his goodbye, then effortlessly mounted his horse, gently encouraged it forward, and was off down the road. Harry followed but turned around to see Hermione glancing out her window, she waved and blew a kiss to him, and he followed suit. He then signed I love you to her and was off, for good this time, after Sean.

They were moving along at a moderate pace, not wanting to move too slow because time was a factor with them being ready for the main objective, but not wanting to tire the horses by moving too fast. Harry enjoyed the feel of the air through his long jet-black hair and around his face. But he was thinking about other things, namely about the girl he left behi

“Hey” Sean said to Harry, “are you okay back there?”

“I’m okay” Harry lied.

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord” Sean retorted back to Harry as he dismounted from his horse and motioned for Harry to do the same. “I can tell that there is something that is occupying your mind, and your mind must be clear if I am to teach you anything and if you are going to learn.”

Harry dismounted and could sense determination and honesty in Sean’s monotone, but he wasn’t about to confide in this Muggle stranger. “It’s nothing,” Harry tried to retort, a little ire in his voice as well.

“You cannot be keeping secrets from me” Sean retorted, “you must be open with me if I am to teach you how to vanquish the Dark Lord.” Harry had had enough of this and had forgotten all the council he had received to listen to and follow Sean.

“Listen!” he began with undisguised ire, “I am out here against my will, I don’t have any fucking choice in this matter. I have never had any say in my life since I was a month old. I have had everything taken away from me, my parents, my guardian, my mentor, my childhood, and now you think that I am about to just convey all my thoughts and feelings to a total stranger and a Muggle then at that!” Harry paused and then uttered “Jesus Christ.”

Harry felt a calloused and stiff hand come violently across his face in a hard slap that sent him off his feet and to the
Harry felt a fury arise from within him. He looked at the man in front of him and had undisguised fury written across his features. He took out his wand and pointed it at Sean, “stupefy!” Harry shouted and pointed his wand directly at Sean, but Sean had already moved out of the way before the spell left the wand. Harry was unfazed by this and aimed his wand again at Sean, this time shouting “petrificus totalus!” with the same result.

“Thought to action,” Sean said as he effortlessly dodged Harry’s latest spell, “that is one thing we will need to improve on.” Harry was at his wits end now and was at the point of doing the unthinkable and performing one of the unforgivables. “Sectumsempra!” he yelled. At this Sean moved out of the way of the spell, and with one fluid motion had moved up to where Harry was. Sean unfastened one of the holsters on his chest and drew a knife, when he came up to Harry he grabbed the front of his wand with his left hand, and brought up his right hand (which held the knife) to Harry’s forearm, causing the wand to leave Harry’s hand. Sean then maneuvered to behind Harry and held his knife to Harry’s throat.

Harry gasped, he realized that he had been defeated, and by a Muggle at that. “If I could beat you,” Sean began still not lowering his knife, “then how long do you think you will last against the dark lord?” Harry was still angry, “it’s a different kind of fighting asshole” he blurted out to Sean who merely shifted slightly and then said, “and how do you think Voldemort or any others of your enemies will be able to counteract when you combine what I have done with this ‘different kind of fighting’ you speak of?”

Comprehension dawned on Harry as Sean still held the knife to his throat, this Muggle could teach him something. “I miss Hermione,” Harry blurted out, “I love her and I am worried that I won’t see her again.” At this Sean lowered his knife and put it back in the sheathe, snapping it shut. Harry was stifling sobs now, “it took us six years to come together, and now I am afraid that all we will ever have is that one night last night together.”

Sean placed a hand on Harry’s shoulder, all the fury gone from his face. “That’s understandable” Sean said with compassion and understanding. “I felt similarly when I first joined the Order, like nothing would ever be the same, like I would never know the things I loved again. But I was only five, I imagine it is even more difficult for you being your age.”

Harry paused and felt a sway of relief come over him, he began to see that Sean wasn’t as completely different from him as he thought. “When do I learn how to do what you did?” Harry asked, hoping to show Sean that he was sincere in his desire to learn.

“First off,” Sean began with his usual no-nonsense monotone, “you are going to have to be open with me…about everything.” Harry nodded in agreement and silently begged Sean to continue. “And you may be a chosen person, and the boy who lived and all that. But I don’t care about who and what you are in your world…realize that you are in my world as of now and that you are nothing.”

At this Harry nodded and showed resolution on his face, “well then” Sean said, “I can give you a few pointers right now if you are interested.” “I’m ready for you to teach me.” Harry said with as much a firmness and determination as he had ever had for anything in his entire life. Sean took a few steps back, picked up Harry’s wand, and handed it back to him. Harry took it and was about to put it into his pocket when Sean stopped him.

“Leave that out” Sean said, “I’ll show you something.” Sean went to the horses and made sure they were secured before going to Harry. “Your main problem is the same as for all people. The fact is that from your thought to your action takes a few seconds…and that is too long.”

Harry thought for a moment and then realized, “that’s how you were able to dodge the spells I threw at you.”

“Aye,” Sean said, “I was taught to recognize the motions a wizard goes through when casting a spell. I realized that most, if not all wizards and witches will say a charm, make a specific motion with their wand, and then point it at the objective. You wait for them to say the charm, watch the motion, and then the instant” Sean snapped his fingers for effect, “that their hand stops. You spring forward, grab the front of their wand,” Sean grabbed the front of Harry’s wand, “bring your
knife up through it,” he brought his hand up past the wand as if he had his knife in his hand again, “then move behind them.”

Harry realized that with Sean behind him as he was, and armed like he was, and with him without his wand, that he couldn’t even apparate without Sean running him through.

“There’s no way for a wizard to counter that” Harry beamed with realization.

“Aye” Sean said, “and that is only the beginning of what you will learn.” Harry now felt something that he had not ever felt about this whole thing…he was eager to begin and learn everything Sean had to teach him.

“When do we start in earnest?” Harry asked with excitement.

“We will begin in earnest when we get to the Order monastery in Ireland which should be in about a week. But,” Sean continued, “I will be teaching you some stuff along the way.”

Harry paused, “it shouldn’t take that long to get to Ireland, even by horse and boat.”

“We will be making a slight detour,” Sean stated.

“Where?” Harry asked with an honest desire to know.

“The lady Hermione, asked me a favor when we first met. She asked me to take you to a place called Godric’s Hollow on the way to where we will be casting off…an early birthday present.”
Chapter 9: Godric’s Hollow

Harry was glad to hear that he would get to go and visit his parent’s graves. He was also grateful to Hermione for having the courage and caring to approach Sean about this detour. They rode for a while longer when Sean came to a stop in front of Harry, “the horses need a rest” he said matter of factly. Harry was glad at this because he wanted a rest himself. He settled onto the ground and began to relax when he heard Sean. “The horses need a rest,” Sean began, “you need to train.”

Harry was about to protest, but then he remembered Sean holding the large knife to his throat and decided that a little training wouldn’t hurt. Sean waved Harry over to a nearby creek and motioned for him to stand near the water. Harry imagined that Sean would teach him some more fighting techniques, but he didn’t do anything. Harry was confused at this, and after realizing that Sean wasn’t going to come out and say anything on his own, Harry broke the silence.

“Sean?” Harry asked in an expecting tone.

“Listen.” Sean commanded to Harry in his usual monotone voice. Harry listened and could hear nothing but the running water.

“All I hear is the creek,” Harry said to Sean.

“Exactly” Sean said, “The root to becoming a great warrior…is water.” Harry was slightly confused at this; he was beginning to wonder how sane Sean really was.

“Water,” Sean began “is the softest substance on Earth, yet it can penetrate through solid rock. It instantly adapts to its environment without a moments hesitation. Water can flow or it can crash, so every warrior needs to become like water, empty your mind and become shapeless and formless…like water.”

With this new explanation, Harry began to listen to the water, but now he let the water consume his mind. His occlumency lessons with Snape, and now the patient teaching of Sean had provided him with the ability to completely empty his mind.

Harry had done it, he had mastered his mind, after two years of trying, and all it took was a few minutes in front of a creek with an Irish monk to master clearing his mind. But what happened next took Harry completely by surprise. He found in an instant that he was seeing things that he had never seen.

He saw a man beaming with pride as he handed a newborn baby to a woman lying in a hospital bed and then the woman saying, “we will name him Sean.” He saw the two older people helping the boy take his first steps, he saw them celebrating a third birthday and the boy looking as happy as he could be. Then he saw one night, when a figure that he could’ve sworn he had seen somewhere before enter the house and kill the man. He then saw the woman hide the child…then nothing.

Harry gasped slightly as he opened his eyes to see Sean peacefully meditating across from him. “Oh my God,” Harry said to himself, “I just saw into Sean’s mind.” Harry suddenly understood several things, he understood why Snape didn’t exert much effort to teach him occlumency but at the same understood why Dumbledore had wanted him to learn it…because it would lead to illigumency. But now he needed to sort out what he had seen of Sean’s past.

After a moment, Sean came out of his meditation to find Harry pale in the face and staring at him with a strange look. “You okay then?” Sean asked. Harry wasn’t sure how to respond, he was hesitant about holding anything back from Sean after the incident with the knife.

“I was able to empty my mind” Harry said simply, “I just thought of water, and then I was formless.”

“Very good” Sean said, “you’re a very quick study, we may pull this off. The next phase is to learn how to act after you have emptied your mind, to act quicker than thought.”
After that they mounted the horses and were off, their next stop would be Godric’s Hollow. About two hours later, they reached a town that Sean told Harry was Godric’s Hollow. “After your love’s request, I had Bill show me on a map, and this is it. We will have a few hours here, and then we ride until nightfall. The Order will be expecting us to cast off tomorrow.”

Harry nodded his understanding to Sean and hoped that he didn’t expect that he had seen what he had. Harry knew that he should not pry, but he had a nagging curiosity as to many things about Sean, especially now that he had seen these memories, some of which Harry was sure Sean didn’t even remember himself. Harry decided that the matter would take some thought, but for now he resolved to go and honor his parents.

They entered the town and found it nearly deserted. It looked like it had once been a very nice place to live. Quiet and secluded, but a nice town, like a good country place that would fetch top dollar from interested retirees. But now, it was more like a ghost town, long bereft of any kind of joy or complacency. There were a few people still living there, and they acknowledged the two strangers with little more than suspicious glares.

They made their way to a tavern in the town, the tavern looked like it was the most lucrative business in the area. They found a place nearby to put the horses and then made their way inside. Sean went in first and was followed by Harry, there were a few people in the tavern who were passing into inebriation, and the bar keep seemed more suspicious than anyone. Sean walked up to the bar and asked if they had any Canada Dry, when he said no he sat down and then waved for Harry to come to the bar.

When Harry made it to the bar, Sean spoke to the bar keep, “we are looking for the cemetery here, would you be kind enough to direct us there?”

“No one goes up there anymore” the bar keep replied grudgingly, “that place is cursed, ever since they buried that wizard and witch there about seventeen years ago.” Harry knew that he had to be talking about his mum and dad, and this caused a knot to form in his heart.

“We’ll take our chances” Sean retorted with absolution in his voice. The bar keep then told them where they could find the cursed graveyard of Godric’s Hollow. Sean thanked the keep, left him something for his troubles, and then proceeded with Harry out of the tavern. They mounted the horses and rode the short distance to a lonely hill with a large gate and an un-kept graveyard inside.

“This is it” Sean said to Harry as he looked over to see that he had nearly collapsed in grief at the destitute condition that his parent’s final resting place was in. “I will help you find your parents” Sean said. “And if you like, I think we can spare some time to make their graves presentable.” With this they began to search the graveyard for the two specific head stones, pushing over grown grass and weeds out of the way as they went.

Harry could guess why the place was unkept, and why it was believed to be cursed. He could visualize in his mind the day that the town saw another stranger come in, this one dressed in dark robes, and then waking to Harry’s mother screaming and finding two dead people in the morning killed by the avada kedavra curse. He wanted to find the markers and put this behind him, find some peace by finally paying proper tribute to the people who gave him life, and then saved it.

“Was your father’s name James?” Harry heard Sean call out from about five rows over.

“Yeah” Harry answered, “and my mother’s name was Lilly.”

“Then I’m pretty sure I found it” Sean replied grimly. Harry made his way over to where Sean stood and examined the headstones, James and Lilly Potter, and the date of death matched up. Weeds had obscured the two headstones, thistles and other overgrown plants. Harry was on the verge of tears as he thought of his parents and the great people he had learned they were. He thought of their sacrifices and of their efforts to bravely defy the dark lord, and how this is how they were to be remembered, with an unkept grave in a small ghost town.

“They deserve better.” Sean said, and Harry agreed with him completely. “I’ll fix this up,” Sean said as he removed his robe and drew one of his swords, “and then I will leave you to make peace.”
Harry backed away from the graves and let Sean use his sword to clear away the overgrown weeds, thistles, grass, and other plants around the headstones. Harry was impressed with how gracefully and fluidly Sean moved and sliced through the debris. “Like water” Harry thought to himself as he remembered the lesson Sean had taught him earlier by the creek.

After about two minutes of moving and cutting, Sean stood back and eyed his work. The names were now clearly visible, and the area around it was clear as well as a little space in front, obviously designed for Harry to sit or kneel in front of the graves. “I will be waiting a short distance away,” Sean said to Harry, “just come back when you’re done.”

Harry walked toward the graves with a very heavy heart. He had envisioned this moment for some time now, and it had intensified after seeing his parents in another graveyard towards the end of his fourth year. He stopped in front of the graves and just looked straight ahead for a few moments before dropping to his knees in tears. He began to think about the people he had loved and lost, his parents, Dumbledore, and Sirius. The last one hit him the hardest; Sirius didn’t even have a marker. Harry began to speak; he was going to talk to his parents for the first time in his life.

“I finally made it out here,” Harry began speaking aloud but only loud enough that he could hear. “Now I’m not sure where to start.” Harry paused wondering where to begin, and how to come to the present. “I started at Hogwarts six years ago, that should make you proud. Every year I have had some kind of adventure with my two best friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Ron’s a great guy, he’s always good for a laugh and there for me when I need him. And Hermione, well, she was always a good friend…but now we’ve become something more, I gave her the bracelet that you” he looked at his dad’s name “gave mum when you two fell in love.”

Harry paused for a moment as he thought of Hermione, the girl he left behind for this uncertain path, but a path that was slowly becoming more certain as Harry realized Sean’s wisdom and how what he was poised to teach him could indeed be useful. “Voldemort has been hunting me since I started at Hogwarts,” Harry continued to his parents, “but I’ve survived this long, and now the man I am here with is going to teach me how to vanquish Lord Voldemort once and for all. I can finally avenge your deaths, and then be free to live the life I am sure you dreamed for me to live.”

Harry stopped again and looked at the now cleared headstones, he felt better now that he had come out to Godric’s Hollow and made peace with his parents. “This town has become a lot worse after you died. But after I vanquish Voldemort, I am sure that all the magical world will become a better place…including Godric’s Hollow.” Harry took a deep breath and then looked one last time at the headstones, “I have to leave now. I hope that you would be proud of me, and I hope that what I am about to do will also make you proud to be my parents…and to call me your son.”

He reached forward and touched and kissed each headstone, he then turned to Sean. “I’m ready now.”

Sean nodded and proceeded to the headstones, Harry was surprised, but Sean knelt before the headstones, made the sign of the cross and then said, “On my honor, I will not let any harm come to your boy…and I will see him fulfill his destiny.” Harry looked surprisingly at Sean, “I respect and understand your desire to talk to your parents before making this journey. I did the same thing before I came to St. George.”

Sean then placed his hand on Harry’s back and led him away from the graveyard and back to the horses. The next part of the journey lay ahead, and they proceeded to ride, not stopping until nightfall.
Harry and Sean picked up the pace after leaving Godric’s Hollow. They rode through the continued woodland leading up to the cast-off point. They galloped through the woods at a fast speed. Harry was the one who suggested it because after his talk with his parents and hearing Sean’s vow, he now wanted to hurry and get his special training started.

A few hours later twilight was approaching and Sean knew it was time to look for a place to stop for the night. He slowed down and Harry followed his lead. The woodland had changed to hilly pastures and they looked for a place to camp. Sean found a spot against a ridge that was partly obscured due to some rocks and trees nearby. “We will camp here tonight,” Sean said to Harry, “take out the blankets and I suggest you find a place to lay down.”

Harry had been carrying Sean’s bag on his horse, the same bag Sean had when he arrived at King’s Cross Station. It now contained blankets for sleeping; some homemade biscuits Mrs. Weasley insisted they take with them, and a few canteens that Sean had filled before they left the Burrow. Harry removed the blankets while Sean went to find a place to keep the horses.

Harry found a spot near a tree and laid down the two blankets, he looked off to the side to see Sean securing the horses around a nearby tree. Harry sighed at the realization that this was the first time he had ever slept outside in his life, he was sure that Sean had lived outside for months at a time. He then looked at the sky to see the sunset and was reminded of another sunset that he had seen only a few days before.

“Harry? Do you believe in destiny?” “This could be the last time we...”

Harry was trying to remember everything he could about those two nights, and the first one in front of the fireplace. He tried to remember every moment, every sight, sound, smell, and above all he wanted to remember the taste of Hermione. He puckered his lips together and kissed at the air, wishing that he could have Hermione’s lips in front of him at that moment in time. He wanted nothing more than to hold her in his arms, he wanted to have her with him, she was now a part of him...and it hurt for him to be separated from that part of him, what he considered the better part of him.

Harry was lost in thought, night had dawned and the sky was full of stars when Sean came to the sight and lightly shook Harry’s shoulder. “Hey” he said, “thinking about her again are you?”

“Yeah” Harry said having abandoned trying to keep this from Sean. “We only had parts of a few nights alone together, the sunset reminds me of her.”

Sean was beginning to show a softer side of himself to Harry in an attempt to show compassion and to show he cared. “I won’t lie to you and say that I understand,” Sean explained to Harry with his usual Irish monotone, “but I can tell you this.”

Sean waited for Harry to face him, and then Sean pointed to the stars over head. “You are in a strange place and in a new world,” Sean said not as a question but as a statement. “When my people, the Muggles, began to explore the world and find what was beyond what they knew. They thought they had fallen off the edge of the Earth, but in reality, they had just reached the other side.”

Sean had gotten Harry’s attention, Harry wanted to see where Sean was going with this, but he was also careful to pay attention. In just a couple of days, Sean had taught Harry more than he had learned in any three years at Hogwarts. He thought that if any of his professors had come across as Sean had, serious and potentially lethal yet compassionate and concerned, that he would be the greatest wizard of all time at this point.

He paid close attention as Sean pointed to the stars, “but they found familiar shapes in the stars to remind them they were okay and to guide them home.” Sean turned and faced Harry at this point, “We all need to find that which gives us this same assurance and guides us home, to where we belong in this world. And to help guide us back to the great Creator,” Sean pointed up to the sky to drive home his point, “who awaits us all.”

Sean could tell that what he had said affected Harry. He hoped that it would be for good, but he knew that there would
be plenty of time for training and for philosophy after they reached the monastery. “Take some rest now,” Sean said, “we have a full day tomorrow and will be arriving at the monastery at night.”

“I still miss her.” Harry said barely loud enough for Sean to hear. Sean turned to Harry and said what would finally give Harry the comfort he needed.

“Just remember that the same stars shine for her, and that you are always underneath the same sky...if you ever miss her Potter, just look to the stars and let them guide you home.”

Harry nodded and made his way towards the blankets, “wait” Sean called out, “you had better take the first watch, I will need to drive the boat and need to be rested...wake me when you can’t stay awake any longer.” Harry nodded and went to lean against the nearby rocks while Sean lay down to sleep. Harry tried to keep watch, but the glimpse he had seen into Sean’s mind was tearing at his curiosity...he needed to know more about his new guardian and teacher.

Harry faced Sean, closed his eyes, and emptied his mind. He had figured out what had happened at the creek. Sean had taught him how to empty his mind, and Harry had discovered that this new talent coupled with his magical abilities made him instantly proficient at occlumency and illigumency...and he had now decided to use it.

He saw once again the scene of a desperate mother hiding her five year-old son from some kind of intruder who had already killed her husband. He heard the mother say a few words to the boy, “whatever happens, stay here and don’t come out until I come and get you.”

Then he only heard a voice that sounded vaguely familiar to him, “...makes good feeding” and then nothing.

The next thing he saw was an enveloping darkness, and he could hear horrible noises. The noises sounded like screaming, and then like drinking, then there was nothing for what seemed like an eternity...nothing but the horrified whimpers of a scared little boy. After a while, the door to the closet where the boy was hidden was being opened and a figure dressed in a robe identical to the one Sean had been wearing came in and kindly beckoned the young sobbing boy out. The next scene he saw would be stuck in his memory, he saw two bodies, a man and a woman, on the floor covered in blood, and he could have sworn he saw fang marks on both their necks.

Harry was in tears now, “he’s just like me, except he remembers them and what he saw” Harry thought to himself. He now had more respect for Sean than he had for anyone else...he had found a kindred spirit. He continued to glimpse into the mind of Sean O’Sullivan and saw the same robed figure taking Sean to a monastery somewhere in a place surrounded by hills and cliffs. He saw the figure showing Sean how to wield a sword and how to use a variety of other weapons, how to track and kill, and how to pray.

The young man arrived at a building that was obviously a sort of domicile. Upon entering, he only had to follow the blood trail to get to his quarry. He did accordingly and found himself facing a door. He put his ear to it to listen inside and could hear the distinct sound of a number of creatures...and they were feeding. He produced a sword from a sheathe at his side, took a breath, and then forced open the door.

The scene that greeted him was one of horror. After looking past the drained human corpses on the floor, he saw five pale skinned creatures with all human features...with the exception of the fanged canines and the blood-red eyes. The five creatures were standing in front of a sixth; this one was obviously a woman, as though they were protecting her. The young man sprang into action, using his sword to simultaneously block and attack. Harry noticed the way the young man moved and attacked and knew that this was a younger Sean...the way he moved was incredibly similar to how he had in the graveyard

After the young Sean had dispensed of the five guardians, he began to pursue the female vampire. He sheathed his
katana, and then unfurled the crossbow strapped onto his left arm, took an arrow from the case at his back, and fired it through the knee of the fleeing vampire, who stumbled to the ground. He ran and was about to plunge his sword through the creature’s heart when she turned around and said one word that caused him to stop...his own name “Sean!”

“Hey” Sean said coming up to Harry, taking him out of his journey. “I think I’ve had enough sleep. Go get some rest.”

Harry said nothing, but proceeded to the sleeping area where he promptly fell asleep. He wondered about what he had seen but decided not to think anything more of it at the time than that he had found someone who was like him, someone who had had to grow up fast and be robbed of a childhood, someone who he could confide in.
Chapter: 11

Chapter 11: Regal
Hermione Granger was leaning against the wall next to one of the large windows at 12 Grimmauld Place. She had arrived there yesterday evening with her parents and had found the Weasleys already arrived. Mrs. Weasley had even begun sprucing up the place, giving it what she called a “woman’s touch” and making it a little more like home.

Hermione sighed and looked outside, then she heard something behind her that caught her attention and looked to see a majestic looking bird with black feathers all along it’s back, a white coat of feathers on it’s front, a yellow beak, and a very majestic glow about him, perched on one of the windowsills. “Isn’t it beautiful?” Ginny had said to Hermione when she noticed her gaze shifting to the bird.

“What did it come from?” Hermione asked.

“I don’t know” Ginny responded, “but I’ll bet Lupin can tell us when he comes.”

When Lupin and Tonks did arrive, Lupin explained that in the Order of St. George they communicate much like in the wizarding world. Only that instead of using owls, the Order of St. George uses falcons.

“That’s Sean’s bird isn’t it?” Ginny said with a wishful tone to her voice. Hermione had told Ginny about the Order of St. George when she first arrived, and that Sean was a vampire hunter and a Knight.

“Indeed,” Lupin answered, “his name is Regal, he is a real Lanner Falcon, and Sean had Bill leave him here on his way to his honeymoon so that we could send him to the monastery to let him know when we have established base here at Grimmauld.”

Ginny was in another world, everything about Sean was so mystical “and dreamy” she thought to herself. His cavalier manner, his mysterious demeanor and profession, and now Ginny was imagining him with his majestic falcon Regal on his shoulder, and riding his horse. Ginny cursed herself for not being born at least three years earlier.

Lupin then called for Regal, but the bird would not budge, Lupin was slightly annoyed by this, but then he realized why...he was speaking to Regal in English. Lupin cleared his throat and tried to remember the word Bill had told him to use. “Regal,” Lupin paused trying to ensure his pronunciation was correct, “tar!” With this, Regal gracefully swooped down and perched on Lupin’s forearm, which was guarded with a falconer’s glove. Lupin then tied a piece of parchment to Regal’s leg, gave him something to eat, paused for a moment to remember another word, and sent him on his way by saying “Imigh!”

Regal let out a falcon’s caw and flew out of the nearest window, off towards Ireland and the St. George monastery that was awaiting the arrival of one of their members and his special guest.

“Such a loyal bird,” Lupin mused, “I can see why Sean treasures him so much.”

“Why did he respond only when you told him “tar”?” Hermione asked Lupin.

“Regal is Sean’s falcon” Lupin began, “and Sean is a proud Irishman whose lineage goes back to the Celtic tribes, he trained Regal in the Irish dialect of the Gaelic language, the language of his ancestors. “Tar” means come and “imigh” means go.”

At this point Ginny thought that she would go into convulsions, now Sean was a dreamy warrior Knight, a heroic member of a mysterious Order, and now a proud member of a noble and ancient race who honored that heritage with everything in himself. Ginny was sure that she would never find a better man than Sean, but she also knew that there was no way they could be together, he was a Muggle warrior-monk, and she was a witch...it could never be.
Once all the Grangers and Weasleys that were staying at Grimmauld Place had been assembled in the main room, Lupin told them what to expect. “I believe that at this point you are all allowed to know the magnitude of this situation and what it means for you.” Lupin explained about the intercepted communiqué, how Harry was in terrible danger, how Bill had come up with a plan to use the opportunity they had to end the insurgence of Lord Voldemort, and how Sean was indispensable to the success of this plan.

“May I ask why we and the Weasleys need to be here” Mr. Granger asked Lupin.

“Snape and LeStrange will be looking for Harry anywhere and everywhere they can think of…and they will start with his best friends.”

“Ron and I.” Hermione said with understanding.

“You especially” Lupin added. The reality that Harry and Hermione were fond of each other had been common knowledge to the Grangers and Weasleys for some time now, but the fact that the two of them had acknowledged and accepted it was not known.

“Voldemort’s forces do not know of this place because of its protection,” Lupin began to explain. “But if Snape and LeStrange are looking for us and don’t find us at home” Ginny began inquisitively, having gotten over her fear of Harry being captured and killed, “then won’t they suspect we know of their plan when they don’t find us.”

“A good observation,” Lupin beamed, “we can only hope that they don’t catch on, and besides, people go on holiday all the time during the summer months…just not in the wild between the Burrow and Ireland.”

“But if Harry isn’t with us,” Mr. Granger asked once again, “than why do we need to go into hiding here?”

“Because” Lupin said, “they would torture and kill you to find out where he is.” There was a tone of seriousness in Lupin’s voice that Hermione had only heard before when she was in the Shrieking Shack with Harry and Ron back in third year.

“I understand” Mr. Granger replied, “How long will we need to be here?” Mrs. Granger asked.

“Voldemort’s plan is to strike at the opening feast at Hogwarts. So for about three months.”

“Can we communicate with Harry at all during that time?” Hermione asked with dread in her voice at the thought of not being able to correspond with him.

“I’m afraid not,” Lupin said grimly, “Mr. O’Sullivan, asked specifically that correspondence be limited between him and myself through Regal. The Death Eaters will not be expecting us to communicate by anything other than owl, so that will give us another advantage.”

Tonks, who had remained silent while Remus had explained, chose this moment to speak up. “It is absolutely vital that all of you comply with these conditions. We will never have another opportunity like this, we can end it all in one swift stroke and have peace once again.” Tonks paused before continuing, she looked specifically at Hermione and Ginny, the two children that were staying at Grimmauld Place, Ron was sleeping at Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes along with Fred and Georg.

“You two must not use Regal to communicate with Harry, he is merely the messenger between Sean and Remus. You must promise not to use Regal, Harry cannot be distracted anymore than he surely already is.” The two young witches nodded and knew that they had to refrain from communicating with Harry. “Good.” Tonks said after Hermione and Ginny showed their consent to comply.

“Very well.” Lupin said. “I am still needed to report to McGonagall about the goings on among the werewolves. But Tonks will be staying here to make sure nothing happens, if the worst should happen she has been instructed on how to summon help. But in the meantime, I bid you all farewell and hope that we will meet again, all in one piece, and in very favorable circumstances.” Lupin then kissed Tonks goodbye and turned to leave, he walked out the door, and apparated away from
“Have all of you made room arrangements?” Tonks asked turning to face the Grangers and Weasleys. They all nodded, and Tonks continued, “then would one of you be kind enough to show me to my room?” Mrs. Weasley volunteered to show Tonks to the nicest of the remaining empty rooms. A few minutes after Molly left with Tonks, Mr. and Mrs. Granger and Arthur decided to go to bed, while Ginny and Hermione decided to stay up and talk for a while…Hermione needed to confess some things and Ginny had been her best friend for some time, “but all in due time” she thought to herself.
Chapter: 12

Chapter 12: The Monastery

“Harry!” he heard her shriek out his name as he strived to fight off Snape, LeStrange, and several other Death Eaters. He fought his way back to find the bane of his existence, the Dark Lord Voldemort, with his wand pointing at the young witch to his side. She was bound and gagged and had a look of utter fear across her face. “And now I will take from you the thing you value most.” Voldemort said in a menacing voice before pointing his wand “avada kedavra” he shouted as he shot a green light toward the bound and gagged witch.

“NOOOO!” Harry screamed aloud as he awoke with a start.

“Nightmare?” Sean asked as he came back from the horses and handed Harry a canteen and biscuit.

Harry took a long and refreshing drink before he answered. “Yeah, it was awful.”

“You have to realize,” Sean began, “that the only way to overcome your fears, including the fear of loss, is to face them and learn to accept them without allowing them to control you.”

Harry had learned to listen to what Sean said, and now he wanted to be sure that he understood and remembered what he heard. “I need to face my fears and accept them without letting them control me,” Harry repeated to Sean.

“Exactly,” Sean answered as Harry began to eat his biscuit. “I can teach you a technique for this when we get to the monastery...so let’s get moving.” Harry nodded and the two of them mounted the horses and rode off.

The two of them didn’t say anything because they both wanted to get to the monastery as soon as possible. Sean wanted to get to the cast off point because it had been far too long since he had been at sea; Harry wanted to get started with his training so that he could be ready for Voldemort at the opening feast. The horses rode at a very fast pace through the hills and woods of England on their way to the coast. Harry loved the rush of the wind through his face, it reminded him of the first time he rode Buckbeak during his third year at Hogwarts, as he and Sean continued on their fast pace to reach the coast, which they did in about two hours.

They arrived at the cast off point to find a man there dressed in a robe like Sean’s sitting next to what looked like some kind of small barge, with another horse standing behind him. Harry looked at the barge and thought it could have been a private ferry. Harry saw Sean talk to the man on the coast, “Eric is coming here to England on assignment,” he heard Sean say, “So I will send the ferry back with him.” The other man nodded and then he and Sean exchanged what Harry could only imagine was some kind of salute made by each of them putting their right hand in a fist and thumping their chest. After this, the man mounted the horse that was behind him and rode off. “Put Cuchulainn and Collins on the raft,” Sean said to Harry.

“Who was that?” Harry asked Sean after he had put the horses on the ferry.

“That was Winston, he’s a Knight currently assigned in England and was assigned to make sure we make it to the water.” Harry nodded and finished securing the horses to the metal bars that were on the side of the ferry.

As soon as everything was ready, Sean started the boat and they were off to Ireland. Sean gave a sigh of pleasure as the spray of the sea hit his face. “It’s been years since I’ve been at sea” Sean said out of the blue, “far too long.” Harry was slightly taken aback by this; it was very rare for Sean to speak without being spoken to first.

“I haven’t been sailing since I was eleven,” Harry said remembering the trip he took back at the beginning of his first year at Hogwarts.

“Then enjoy this,” Sean said to him, “getting there is all the fun.”
“Don’t you mean getting there is half the fun?” Harry asked in a respectful tone.

“No,” Sean replied, “getting there is all the fun because once you are there it is time to take care of whatever you set out to do.”

Harry looked out at the water and watched it pass by while Sean steered the boat. They could already see the Irish coast after only a brief time on the water, so Harry knew that they didn’t have much time until they reached land. He looked out at the water and remembered what Sean had told him about water, and how using this had enabled him to master occlumency and illegumency in a matter of minutes. Harry closed his eyes and allowed the bobbing of the ferry and the rushing of the sea to calm his nerves and he let his mind drift.

He was wondering what Hermione and the rest of his friends were doing at that moment. He would have thought back to better times, but he had realized that doing that was pointless and that he needed to focus on the present so that he and the ones he cared about could have a future. It seemed that he and Sean were only on the water for a few minutes when Harry felt the boat come to a stop…he had no desire to pry further into Sean’s mind, he had already seen enough.

“We’re here,” Sean said to Harry as he stopped the ferry at a more secluded part of the Irish coast near the cliffs of Moher, it was near a high cliff and Harry remembered seeing what he thought was a castle or a late Roman fortress from the water, but then he thought of something.

“Was that building I saw from the boat the monastery?” he asked Sean.

“Aye,” Sean answered, “and these horses know the way up, just follow me and trust the horse.” Sean jumped off the ferry and anchored it.

The horses had obviously been on a trip like this before because they were incredibly calm the entire time. They got their things together, let the horses off and then gave them a moment to drink, Ginny had included some carrots for the horses with her mum’s biscuits and Sean gave some of the carrots to the horses.

After the horses had rested and Harry and Sean had finished off Mrs. Weasley’s biscuits, they mounted up for the final leg of the journey. Sean led the way and Harry followed, they went to the base of the cliff and Harry looked up. The cliff looked as though the only way up it was to climb, but then Harry noticed that Sean had already started around. Harry quickly followed and was surprised to see Sean’s horse climbing up the cliff as though there were a clear trail…and then Harry felt the horse he was riding doing the same.

Harry was more than a little terrified as he looked at the rough terrain of the cliff and the constantly increasing distance to the ground. Then he realized that the horse was perfectly calm about it and that Sean had said for him to trust the horse. He also remembered Sean telling him to pay attention and that the training process started right when they left the Burrow. So Harry tried to think about what lesson he should learn from this. He thought about what Sean had told him so far, and about what conditions were apparent at the time. He still wasn’t quite sure as to what he should take from this when he could see the top of the cliff.

Sean had brought his horse to a stop and was waiting for Harry to come in beside him. After Harry did so, Sean began to speak as the horses moved forward at a slower pace.

“Harry, there are some things you need to know before we enter the monastery. First, you are here as a special guest, normally no one outside the Order is allowed inside, the only two exceptions have been you and Albus Dumbledore, so act like an honored guest. And second, Bill and Remus have told me about some of your adventures and habits at school. And I have to tell you that it would really be best if you would not wander on your own here.”

Harry nodded to show his understanding, and then they proceeded to the front gate of the monastery. Harry could see the large front gate and the parapets on either side. Harry could also see a man on top of the parapet looking down at them. The man had a large high-powered rifle in his hand and was aiming it between Sean and Harry.
“Who goes there?” the man yelled down to Harry and Sean.

“I am Sean Alexander O’Sullivan of Ireland, here by permission of the Priest with the boy wizard!”

They saw the guard turn around and yell, “Sean’s back, open the gate!”

Shortly after, the doors came open to welcome Sean and Harry, and they rode into the Order monastery. Harry saw that the inside was massive, so much so that he turned to Sean to inquire about it. “This place is huge,” Harry said, “is all this really needed for a monastery?”

Sean was expecting questions, so he patiently responded. “This monastery was built shortly after the Order was first founded. That was during the early parts of the Middle Ages, after Vindolanda had been built. This was designed to be a training ground for warriors who would be monks and knights. Therefore, those in charge felt it best to build it after the manner of the fortresses of the time.”

After seeing that he had given a satisfactory answer, Sean continued onward to the stables. Harry couldn’t help noticing several Knights stopping to look at Sean as he rode in. Some of them brought their right hands up to a fist and held them over their chests, a kind of salute, which Sean returned. Others of them would utter a strange phrase to Sean; something like “Errand go Brawh” that Harry didn’t understand but that Sean would repeat.

In a few moments, they came to the stables where a man, who looked closer to Bill’s age, with long brown hair and a fairly jubilant manner in his walk, greeted them. The man immediately ran up to the black horse Harry had been riding and began to stroke it’s mane as the horse affectionately nuzzled the man in front.

“So wonderful to see you again Collins” the man said as he continued to stroke the horse. Sean then dismounted from his brown horse and Harry followed suit. Sean gave the reins of his horse to another Knight who greeted them as the man in front of the horse called Collins did the same. Sean and the man came together in a brief embrace and broke as Sean spoke.

“Daniel my old friend, I am glad to see you here and well.”

“And I am glad to see that you aren’t dead yet,” Daniel responded in a somewhat humorous tone. “I always said that you were too young to be made a Knight…but you have proved me wrong.”

Harry watched all this from a short distance away and couldn’t help but notice how close the two men seemed. After a few moments, Sean turned to Harry and spoke to him.

“This is Daniel Xavier Flanagan,” he said pointing to the longhaired man in front of them, “he is a Knight stationed here and the owner of the horse you rode.”

Harry tried to imitate the salute he had seen the men giving Sean earlier, which brought a smile to Daniel’s face. “Thank you for letting me use your horse” Harry said very politely.

“For Sean O’Sullivan,” Daniel began, “I would give my bloody limbs and innards.”

Sean turned to Daniel and spoke. “This boy will be my pupil for a few months, and I would appreciate it if you would look after Cuchulainn while I am teaching.” Daniel nodded in reply and he and Sean shook hands by gripping each other by the forearm.

“The Sagart asked me to report when I got here with the boy, so I will take leave now.” After Sean said this, Daniel urged him on and Harry followed. They began to walk on foot and Harry surveyed his new surroundings. He thought it looked like a smaller Hogwarts, it was in the same style of a castle, but it was apparent that this was a place for a different type of learning.

“We will be meeting with an old teacher of mine,” Sean said, “He is the equivalent of the Headmaster here…”Priest” is his
Harry nodded and continued on with Sean, taking in every step of the place that would be his home and training grounds for the summer. As they had entered, Harry noticed that the different people inside were not regarding him much at all (something he was not used to with being a celebrity in the wizarding world), but that every single one of them would stop and salute Sean by placing their right fist over the left side of their chest, or by raising their right hand in a sort of open fist and saying that same phrase Harry had heard on entering the monastery, but this time he heard it as “Erin go Braugh.”

“They show him so much respect,” Harry thought to himself as they continued on.

“What does that phrase mean?” Harry asked Sean, “The one the men say to you?”

Sean answered with almost an air of pride in his voice. “Erin go Braugh, is Gaelic for “Ireland go brave” and is an old Celtic war cry that we Irish Knights will say to each other.”

Harry understood now, and the two of them continued onward until they came to what had to be the main part of the monastery. It was a fairly large building that was completely enclosed, and looked large enough to be a dormitory. It had two levels, and Harry would find out that the top one was where the Sagart stayed and worked.

As they entered the building, Harry saw on either side of the room, a large trophy case with glass in the front of it that stretched the entire length of the building. He looked closely and took notice of some of the items inside. There were letters, some of which looked like they were centuries old. There were also swords and other weapons, carefully preserved and labeled with things like the sword that Lancelot used at Baden Hill, or the longbow used by the great Knight Henry Exeter in the clash with the dragon at Edinburgh, some carried labels like gifted to the Knight Thomas Spardo from the Greek rulers. There were also portraits and some photographs.

“Hey” Sean said to Harry to get his attention, “you may like this one.” Sean pointed to a large painting that depicted some kind of battle and had a fairly large plaque with many names on it.

“Many centuries ago,” Sean began, “there was a Dark Lord like your Lord Voldemort who tried to enslave the wizard world and the human world. But the wizards and the Knights of St. George had an alliance at that time and joined together to fight this Dark Lord, his name was Edmund Landrow, and they met his forces at a place we call Bloody Hill. Many Knights and Wizards died that day--but they won.”

Harry looked at the painting with interest and fascination, noticing that on the plaque there was no distinction between which names were wizards and which names were knights. Instead, there was an inscription that read: Brothers in arms. Brothers in cause. They fought and died as one, together.

It was at this point that Harry’s eyes wandered to another large plaque, this one with the words “Those Who Gave The Ultimate Sacrifice In The Fight For God, Truth, and Justice” along the top and had several names engraved into it with the date and place where they had made that sacrifice.

Harry grabbed Sean’s robe to stop him for a moment before they came to the stairs that would lead them up. When Harry had Sean’s attention, he asked him “what is this place?”

“This” Sean said, “is where the Priest lives and works.”

“Here in this room?” Harry asked.

“Of course not,” Sean replied, “this is the trophy room where we keep precious artifacts, gifts, and other things that different Knights of the Order from this monastery have acquired over the centuries. You see, every Knight will have a permanent station, but will leave from there for different missions that are best suited to his skills. The others and I are here in Ireland for our home station, but sometimes are sent abroad. In the course of various missions, we will often obtain or be given something of note… and we will present it to the Sagart who puts it in one of these trophy cases.”
And the plaque?” Harry asked pointing to the one he had noticed earlier.

Sean’s voice became quieter as though he were in a holy place. “That is a record of Knights who have fallen in battle. We don’t bury them; we burn their bodies and cast their ashes heavenward. But their names are immortalized here on this plaqu

Sean then pointed to the name of Sergei Romanovich on the plaque. “This was the vampire I told you about who became a Knight of the Order. He served and fought in the Order until he fell in battle and he received a true Knight’s burial.”

After he finished, Sean performed the salute Harry had seen before and dignifiedly shouted, “For God, truth, and justice; Erin go Braugh!” He paused for a moment and then pointed to the staircase. “The Sagart is upstairs, he is expecting us.”

They went up the stairs, and Harry noticed how they were made of cold stone, much different from the sometimes-treacherous stairs back at Hogwarts. The stairs went on for a little while until they reached the top and Harry could see a clearly visible door. “We are going to meet with the Priest, I will go in first, you can stay out here, and I will call you in.”

Harry nodded and Sean knocked on the door. A figure walked out of the door, he was an older man of about fifty or sixty, about three inches taller than Harry, who had grown to six feet, with a slim build that Harry was sure had been quite muscular back when the man was younger. Sean dropped onto his left knee, placed his right fist over the left part of his chest while placing his left hand on the ground and bowing his head. Harry paused for a moment and then did the same.

“Sagart” Sean said in a low and respectful voice to the man who now stood in front of him. The figure told Sean and Harry to arise and then began to speak to Sean in a language Harry had never heard before. During the conversation, Harry heard Sean say his name and point to him.

“Ah,” the man began “this must be Harry Potter, I look forward to having a few words with you after I meet with Sean.” Harry simply nodded, and then the older man and Sean went back into the office.

After they had entered the office and the Priest had sat down, he invited Sean to do the same, and he did. The office was fairly massive, for it doubled as a study and was often used for meetings involving the Knights. The last quarter part of the room was separated from the office by a door and was the Priest’s bedchamber. The two of them spoke in Irish Gaelic and the conversation started out in a very friendly way, they spoke with each other like a father and son, and since the Priest had raised Sean as his own, they pretty much were.

“Sean my boy, I am glad to find that you have made it here okay, were their any problems?”

“No trouble” Seam answered in his usual voice deciding to leave out the incident at the creek.

“You’re keeping something from me,” the older man stated with no doubt in his voice.

Sean gave a smirk, “I never could keep anything from you. There was an incident on the trip where the boy had a slight outburst, I really don’t blame him, a slight scuffle ensued, but I am confident that he is over any bad feelings and will be open for the training.”

“Are you sure about this,” the man asked.

“Absolutely.” was Sean’s response.

“I must tell you,” the Sagart began, “that I am very hesitant about this whole thing. Given our current relations with the wizard community and the fact that many of our Knights are already in the field on assignment. I don’t think we can spare you, or that you are ready to train.”

The Sagart said the last part with a pause as he looked to Sean who had risen to his feet and moved his way to a door to
the side of the desk that led to a balcony overlooking the monastery grounds.

“I only ask for Tristan Bruce, John McGregor, and David McAllen, three good werewolf hunters,” Sean began to the Sagart, “and if you feel this way, then why did you give me permission to meet with Bill, attend his wedding, get the boy, bring him back here, and I assume I still have permission to train him?”

As Sean spoke, the Sagart moved from his seat and came beside him. After Sean finished, the Sagart answered, “because if what you told me about the message and this Dark Lord is true. Than by you training this boy, who is a hero in their world, you can further the effort started by Dumbledore, God rest his soul, and the previous Sagart to further relations between our two groups.”

“But, you said I'm not ready to train” Sean said without question in his voice.

“Given the fact that you have a friendly relationship with a wizard, and your background is similar to what Dumbledore told me about the Potter boy. You are the best for this task.”

Sean had mixed feelings about this confession by the Sagart. On the one hand he had told him he was the most qualified of the Order Knights. But on the other hand, he was told he was not ready to train, but Sean was a very obedient Knight and devoutly loyal to his Sagart, so he answered honestly.

“Thank you for putting so much faith and trust in me Sagart.”

“It is very well placed” the Sagart began, “I raised you since you were a very small boy, I trained you from when you first arrived at this monastery, and I asked you to accompany me when I was named Sagart and to Gringott’s so long ago. There is much you have left to learn, but you have come farther in less time than anyone in, I believe, the history of this Ord

Sean continued to glance outside at the beautiful summer day in the Irish cliffs, but the Sagart had turned to face him and was now looking at him with a look of genuine concern.

The Sagart chose to continue. “Ever since I found you in that closet sixteen years ago, terrified and alone, I knew that you would not last long in the real world...that they would come for you. I took it upon myself to train you, even though you were far too young for it, and you have never disappointed me. Now, you are about to attempt something that has never been done. You are going to pass on our secrets to a wizard. Do you have any idea what that could entail?”

“You are worried that another Dark Lord will become like what I will make the boy. One who can use what we know and magic, but who will be evil and use this combination to destroy everything we stand and strive for.”

“Aye” the Sagart responded to Sean’s statement.

“I have a good feeling about this boy,” Sean said, “if for no other reason because he loves and feels a need to protect.”

Understanding dawned on the old Sagart, “and those traits are central to the Order of St. George” he ended Sean’s thought for him.

“Aye” Sean answered.

“You have my blessing” the Sagart said, “and my faith and trust.”

“Thank you Sagart.” Sean said with gratitude. The two of them faced each other for a few moments before the Sagart told Sean to send in Harry. Sean dropped to his knee, saluted his Sagart and mentor, and bowed low in honor and respect.

“Get up,” the Sagart said, “you do me too much honor for me to ask you to bow.”

Sean stood up and said “but it would be disrespectful and ungrateful of me not to,” he then gave one last nod, and went
to send Harry in.

There was a knock on the door and the Sagart bid Harry to enter. Harry entered and found that this was much like Dumbledore’s study, but without stairs and without the many wizard decorations that had adorned his office. Harry felt a wave of emotion come over him as he thought of his old mentor and the source of protection, comfort, council, and direction that he had been for him…and now he was gone.

As Harry entered, one particular portrait caught his attention; it was a large canvas, framed and hung on the wall. It depicted a young man on a horse, with both of them in the grasp of an enormous dragon, and the young man about to plunge a long lance into the dragon’s chest.

“Saint George and the Dragon,” the Sagart said to Harry. “He is the patron saint and founder of this organization. Come out here please Mr. Potter,” he said from the balcony, “I think you will enjoy the view from here.”

Harry had noticed that the Sagart’s voice was quite different from Sean’s. The Sagart had a deep voice like Sean, and there was a trace of an accent in it, but it sounded like the accent had been lost for the most part.

“I hope you realize what a benefit it is for you to be here, and especially with Sean.” Harry made his way next to the Sagart and prepared to bow but was halted, “your gesture is appreciated but you need not bother yourself with such. Sean does that out of respect for me, and he has since before I became Sagart.”

“Um, priest?” Harry began slightly uncomfortably due to the fact that he had not heard Sean use any of the terms he had told Harry to use when addressing this man.

“Aye?” the Sagart responded.

“I was wondering if I could ask you some questions.”

“Of course,” the Sagart replied.

“Why does Sean call you Sagart, and what language was that you two speak in?”

A smile appeared on the older man’s face as he looked at Harry, “You remind me of Sean when he was about your age, the way you have a tone of seriousness about you and a desire to know more.”

There was a pause while the two looked each other over, Harry thinking of Dumbledore and suddenly finding many similarities between him and the aging priest beside him.

“But to answer your questions,” the Sagart began, “Sean and I are both Irish Celtic in our ancestry, and we speak to each other in the old Irish Gaelic language. The title I was given about two years ago is Priest, and the Irish Gaelic word for Priest is Sagart.”

“The view is nice from here” Harry said as he could see the grounds of the monastery. He was particularly interested to see that much of it was not stone floor at all, but had been built around the natural grass of the hills. He could see many men out training in those fields with all sorts of weapons, including guns and swords, or training in unarmed combat. The Sagart speaking to him brought him back to the present.

“This will not be a holiday for you Harry, you are here to train.” The Priest began to gesture to the outdoor part of the monastery, where Harry had noticed the different men training. “You will be doing much of your physical training in that area, and you must listen to Sean and do what he says. Dumbledore spoke very highly of you, so I will be expecting great things from you in these next two months.”

Harry realized what had been said. “You knew Dumbledore?”
“Aye” the Priest responded, “he and I met together often soon after I became Priest here. Dumbledore dreamed of the Order of St. George and the wizarding world uniting to defeat Voldemort. He came to us after the Dark Lord began recruiting werewolves and Inferi for his cause. He figured that both our causes would be met by us uniting.”

The Priest paused after this and looked down, “his loss was a terrible blow to this effort. But we have Sean who has friendly ties to your world through his friend…and that’s all we have going for us at the moment.”

“There was something I wanted to ask you about Sean” Harry said quickly to the Priest.

“And what might that be?”

“Did he use the water analogy?” the Priest interjected.

“Yeah he did,” Harry said, “how did you know?”

“He learned that from his teacher in China and from a book he received from him,” the Priest answered, “but what was it you wanted to ask me?”

“When I empty my mind, I can map other people’s minds. I discovered this with Sean’s mind and I saw a part of a memory that I have been wondering about ever since I saw it.” Harry told the Priest about the memory and how it ended with Sean shooting the woman through the leg and then him hearing his name.

The Priest paused, not knowing how to continue. “You are describing to me something that happened three years ago, when Sean was eighteen. This may be rough for you to take, but it will also help you understand him better.” The Priest then told Harry the rest of the story.

“Sean!” The figure turned over and revealed herself to the young man with his sword drawn and ready to strike. The face had changed with her condition, the eyes were red, the skin was pale, but somehow Sean knew who it was.

“Mama?” Sean said with disbelief.

“Oh Sean” the woman said as she stood up and moved to embrace him, “I missed you so much.”

Sean lowered his sword, but stepped back causing his mother to stop with a questioning look on her face. “What’s wrong son?” she said.

“You’re dead” Sean said, “I saw your body as I was being taken out of the house…you were dead along with dad.”

“Oh Sean, Raiganzi chose to turn me into a vampire rather than kill me. It took effect a few hours after I was bitten; I woke up in a morgue and then joined him.”

“You willingly joined the head vampire?” Sean asked with a hint of disbelief in his voice, “the same man who murdered your husband?”

The woman looked at him with a look of realization, realization that he was an enemy.

“Come with me son,” she said, “I’m your mother and I love you, it will be like it was before that monk took you away from your home and family.” She was trying to appeal to the part of him that remembered the brief perfect childhood that he had.

Conflict was brewing inside the young man, he had loved his parents, he had missed his childhood, but he knew that there was no going back to it. The expression on his face never changed, he looked at the woman who had given birth to him and raised him with his father and now she wanted him to go with her and be with his mother forever.
He then thought of the kind man who had taken him from the closet and off to a mysterious place on a far away land.

The man who had taught him to let go of what he feared and devote his efforts and strength to something greater than himself. The kind man who had given him purpose and taken him in after the horrible tragedy he witnessed. He thought of what he had told him about evil, and that it could come on straight out and without question, or that it could be deceitful and come across as appealing.

“Son?” she asked him seeing that he was taken back in thought.

The face on the young man didn’t change, “my mother…,” he began, “is dead.”

The woman got a terrified look on her face…and then the boy, with tears in his eyes, brought his sword through her heart. The woman shrieked and caught Sean’s eyes one last time before her eyes rolled back and she dropped to the ground.

“He came back here to the monastery,” the Priest continued to Harry, “for purification, a three day process that the Knights coming back from a field assignment go through to become pure after being exposed to such evil and having to kill. I was in charge of bringing him his meals,” the Priest paused at this point, choked up with emotion, before he continued. “And it was the only time since I first saw him in that closet that I have heard him cry. After that, he put up his katana and has been using the two swords he uses now ever since.”

Harry didn’t know what to think, the Priest was right that he would never look at Sean the same way again. On the other hand a lot of things began making sense to him.

“Does that have anything to do with why the other Knights here respect Sean so much?” Harry asked.

“Aye” the Priest responded, “the other members realize that Sean showed more devotion to this cause and more resolve to the oaths he had taken than they would have been willing to do.”

An even greater sense of respect came over Harry, he thought that if he was to meet his mother now and it turned out that she had become a Death Eater, would he have been willing to do what was necessary and destroy her? Harry knew that he did not want to know the answer to that question, and he did not want to think about it anymore.

The Priest spoke to Harry, “The dormitories are over there,” he said pointing to a group of smaller buildings. “Since you are a guest here I am afraid we cannot offer you a private room. But you will find clothing provided for you when you get to Sean’s room, and you won’t need your wand for a while.”

“Okay” Harry said in response, still not getting over the fact that Sean had killed his own mother when he found her to be a vampire. “Thank you priest” Harry ended, and with that he was excused from the study and found Sean.
Chapter 13: Breathe

Sean placed the bag on the floor of his dormitory as Harry walked in behind him. Sean took out the blankets and placed them on the floor, the room wasn’t very big, but it was big enough for the two of them to sleep in and still have space. There was a window that faced out towards the countryside around the monastery, and Harry noticed a perch that extended from the window.

“What’s this for?” Harry asked.

“That’s for my falcon Regal,” Sean answered while settling the thicker of the blankets over a mat on the ground.

“You have a pet?” Harry asked.

“Regal is my means of communication with the monastery when I am out in the field, and right now he is the courier between myself and 12 Grimmauld Place.”

“What?” Harry asked.

“At the time, my falcon Regal is being used for communication between the Order of the Phoenix and myself.”

“Where is he now?” Harry asked.

“Regal is trained to stay in one place until sent with a message. I gave Regal to Bill and he dropped him off at Grimmauld Place on his way to his honeymoon. Lupin was told to send me a message when they have established base there.”

Harry nodded his understanding and looked around his new room, there was one modest bed, and Sean was setting up the mat and blankets on the ground. There was also a place for Sean to hang his weapons, which he started doing after he set up the mat and blanket.

There were two specific items that caught Harry’s eye. One was a book with a familiar looking figure on the cover. Harry read the cover “Tao of Jeet Kune Do” it said. The other item was a katana blade placed on top of two pegs in the wall inside a sheath with some kind of thin rope dangling from around the top of it.

“When can I learn that technique you mentioned?” Harry asked Sean as he un-strapped the crossbow from his forearm.

“Let me put up my weapons, and you change into those training robes,” Sean said pointing to the robes on the other side of the room, and then we’ll go to the training area.”

Harry did as he was told and changed from the jeans and t-shirt he was wearing into the training robes on the other side of the room. It was easy for him to tell which were the training robes because the other choices were the tank top and pants suit that Sean wore under what Harry called his monk robe, and the monk robe itself. After Harry had changed, Sean, who had removed his own formal robe, motioned for Harry to follow him out.

They made their way to the outdoor part of the monastery and Harry noticed that there weren’t any other people around. “Where is everybody?” Harry asked his new teacher and guardian.

Sean paused for a moment as if in thought, then understanding came to him and he made his way off as Harry followed. Sean stopped short and then Harry came beside him to see the sight that awaited him. At least two hundred men of varied ages stood around a pile of wood with some sort of stretcher with a body on top of it above the wood.

Sean found Daniel in the group and spoke with him as Harry listened. “Who is that and were did he fall?”
“His name is Cameron,” Daniel began in answer, “Harold Cameron. He fell at the hands of a group of werewolves in Germany.”

Sean paused and bowed his head in reverence before asking Daniel, “when will the Sagart begin the ceremony?”

Sean received his answer by seeing the figure of the Priest walk up behind the pile of wood with two Knights on either side of him, one holding a lit torch. The Sagart paused, and then began to speak.

“Brothers in arms and in God. We are gathered here to lay to rest one of our brave and noble Knights. Harold Dean Cameron served his brotherhood and his God with honor, integrity, and with devotion. He never once complained of the hardships of training, or of the duty he had undertaken. We now purify him by fire, and will cast his ashes to the heavens. God receive your servant speedily and without pause.”

The Priest then took the torch from the Knight and lowered it onto the wood and the flames jumped skyward to consume the body of the fallen knight.

Sean, Daniel, and the other knights assembled raised their swords into the air and brought their right fists to their chest in salute to their fallen comrade and all shouted at the top of their lungs, “For God, truth, and justice, Erin go Braugh!”

Harry looked around as the group began to chant the last phrase as they raised their swords and pounded their chests in salute “Erin go Braugh!” “Erin go Braugh!” “Erin go Braugh!” “Erin go Braugh!”

After they stopped chanting, Harry turned to talk to Sean. “Why do you look at this so pensively?”

Sean gave no answer, but Harry used his newfound powers of illegumeny to read his thoughts, “Because I am sure that is the fate that awaits me.”

After the ceremony was concluded, Sean led Harry to the outdoor training area of the monastery grounds. Sean sat down and crossed his legs Indian-style, Harry waited for a moment and then did the same.

“Close your eyes.” Sean commanded Harry, and he obeyed.

“When you are confronted with any type of fear,” Sean began after seeing Harry close his eyes, “your body and senses begin to over react and you are thrown into a state of outright panic. The secret is to focus on only one word,” Harry’s interest was peaked and he listened intently. “Breathe” Sean said in a light voice that made Harry wonder if he was giving him a command or telling him the word.

Sean evaluated, “Just breathe, and focus on the very act that draws life into our bodies. Breathe,” He paused, “and let your fears disappear, forget about everything else except the need to go on living and to survive.”

Harry balanced his arms on his legs and began to follow Sean’s counsel. He discovered that Sean was right, Harry just kept saying “breathe” to himself in his mind over and over again, and found that as he did so, everything else seemed to fade away.

He was calmer than he had ever been in his entire life, not even the Dark Lord could affect him when he was in this state of mind. Here he found complacency and discovered that this was indeed a good technique for letting go. One thing he noticed was that he even forgot about Hermione for a moment, and the awful nightmare he had had before did not linger with him. The two of them stayed like that until Sean heard a horn sounding off.

“Hey” Sean lightly shook Harry, “that means they are serving food, we need to go to the outdoor area.”

The two of them made their way back to the outdoor area near the Sagart’s office/quarters and fell in line behind a few other Knights as they waited for their food.
After some time, they had their dinner. The food was humble and meager, but it was enough, especially since Harry and Sean hadn’t had a real meal in several days, the only homemade food they had enjoyed for the past few days was the biscuits Mrs. Weasley had given them before they left.

Each of them had a bowlful of Irish stew and a tall glass of milk. “I hope you like this,” Sean began, “it’s all you will have for dinner while you are here.”

The two of them sat at a table outside in an area near where the food was being served. There were several more tables and other Knights sitting around and eating. Some entertained themselves with games and others with contests or by playing music.

After a few moments Daniel and a few other Knights came and spoke to Sean. Sean introduced them to Harry who took his time shaking hands and learning names. While they ate, a call went up for Sean. “Come on laddy,” one of the older knights said to him, “do it.”

After this a chant of “Do it! Do it! Do it!” went up among the knights until Harry asked, “what do they want?”

Sean paused and then stood up, “give me a knife,” he said aloud, which prompted cheers from the men.

After Sean had acquired a throwing knife, he looked for a spot in one of the wooden beams near the eating area and threw the knife into it. The knife was about eight feet from the ground and shook a little from side to side as Sean moved towards it. There was an almost reverent hush as he made his way a short distance before it. Then in a flash, he jumped up in the air, turned his body in a full 360 and kicked the knife out of the beam.

Another round of cheers went up from the Knights who were assembled there and several of them patted Sean on the back and talked with him for a moment. Harry did not hear what they said to Sean because one Knight turned to him to say, “you are very fortunate to have him as your teacher boy, you would be good and smart to listen to him.”

Harry could only mutter a low and quiet “yeah” in response.

They ate their stew and drank their milk; Harry was taking in what he had just seen. “They respect him so much,” Harry thought to himself…and now he knew that it was for his physical skills and absolute determination as well as what happened with his mother.

Sean said nothing as he ate and drank, he had a lot on his mind as far as how to train Harry and in what order to do it. He knew that it was important, and he had a good idea, but he needed to be careful not to get to the final tests too soon.

After they finished their food, Sean told Harry that they should be preparing for bed. Harry wanted to start his training right off the bat, but Sean assured him that it was absolutely necessary to get a good night's sleep.

With that they went back to Sean's room, but when they returned, they had a visitor.

“Regal” Sean said as they entered, and Harry saw Sean’s Lanner Falcon. Harry could see why Sean called the bird Regal; there was a definite majesty about him.

“Regal, tar.” Sean said to the bird, which swooped down onto his arm and then began to nip at Sean’s finger affectionately as he stroked his head and feathers.

Sean took the note attached to Regal’s leg, put him on his perch, gave him some food, and then unraveled the note and began to read it.

“What does it say?” Harry asked.

“It’s from Lupin” Sean answered, “he says that they have established base at 12 Grimmauld Place, that the Grangers and
Weasleys are hiding out there for the summer, and that they want me to update them as soon as possible on progress."

“We will start your training tomorrow,” Sean continued to Harry, “after you have had a full nights sleep and I can answer this note.”

“Would you mind leaving out the incident at the creek?” Harry asked Sean.

“I was only planning on saying that we got here safely and without major incident” Sean responded.

“Okay” Harry answered.

Sean lit a candle and began to write, after he finished he decided to let Regal rest the night, he left the note where he had written it, and then prepared for sleep. Sean told Harry to take the bed and he would take the mat, Sean dropped to his knees and uttered some words in Latin, then got under the covers and went to sleep; Harry had already gone to sleep earlier.

As Harry settled into sleep, a very peculiar dream awaited him, and the same was true for Sean. Harry was having a dream he remembered having during his fifth year at Hogwarts.

Cho was telling Harry about Cederic giving her Chocolate Frog cards, but instead of her throwing cards up in the air like last time, he saw her face turn into that of Cederic Diggery.

After a few moments, Cho was replaced by Ginny Weasley, after a few moments her face turned into that of Lord Voldemort and Harry stepped back, ready to fight.

What happened next was something Harry had not expected; the figure of Ginny with Voldemort’s face disappeared and was replaced with Hermione Granger.

Harry waited for her face to change, waited to see some kind of change. But instead, he just looked into those perfect brown eyes that made his heart skip a beat, and then he heard her say it, “I love you Harry.”

Harry walked nearer to his true love, he went in to tell her about how much he missed her, how much he had wanted to hold her to him, and then it happened.

The air around them went dark; Hermione got a look of fear on her face and began to fall back into the abyss behind her.

“Harry!” she called out his name and reached out her hand, but Harry could not reach her in time.

“Hermione!” he yelled to the disappearing form, but she was gone.

He then heard an all too familiar cackle and laugh, the same one he had heard in his head two years ago, and in a graveyard three years ago…Voldemort.

“There is nothing you care about that I can’t take away,” the voice said into Harry’s head with villainous malcontent, “I have taken everything from you. Your mudblood woman will be next, and then I will take you and anyone who gets in my wa

Harry’s scar began to burn incessantly and he came awake covering it with his hand and screaming in pain.

Almost automatically, he remembered what Sean had taught him earlier that day, “Breathe.” Harry sat up on the bed cross-legged, closed his eyes, rested his arms on his legs, thought of water to empty his mind, and then breathed. After a moment Harry realized that he was not alone, and he looked over to see Sean in the same position on his mat.

Sean had drifted off to sleep quite content and peacefully, he was used to not dreaming, or not remembering what he had dreamed. Tonight would be different.
He was standing on a group of rocks in the middle of a body of water, training in unarmed combat. The flowing water in
the background calmed him and set his mind at peace. He stood on one leg and then began leaping around the clump of
rocks. He would kick and punch at the air as he flipped and leapt, he eventually came to a stop, and then heard something.

“Sean.” He heard a female voice say to him in a calm and seductive tone.

He turned around to see the toned athletic figure of a very pretty sixteen year-old girl with flowing red hair and stunning
brown eyes.

“Ginerva?” he asked to the figure as she made her way closer.

“When are you coming back to me?” She asked as she brought her hands to his defined mid-section, and eventually
snaked her arms around his waist.

“What are you doing?” Sean asked in a quizzical and horrified tone.

She undid his training robe and it fell to the ground to reveal his black pants, tank top, and crucifix, she then reached her
hands under his shirt as she slightly giggled, “I’m undressing you.”

Sean’s entire body began to heat up, his breathing was becoming faster and heated, he wanted to stay asleep and see
what Ginny had in store for him next. In a moment he remembered that he was a celibate monk who had made certain
oaths, that this was his friend’s sister who was five years his junior, and that this was an impure thought and dream all toget

“Ahh!” Sean quickly gasped as he shot up on his mat. He realized that he was soaking wet, and what scared him was that
it was not only sweat…he had had his first wet dream.

He calmed himself by sitting cross-legged, resting his arms on his legs, closing his eyes, emptying his mind, and
breathing. Sean was still sorting out his thoughts about what had just happened when Harry sprang awake and saw him.

After a few minutes, they both finished and Harry spoke to Sean, “nightmare?” he asked.

“I’m not sure” was all Sean could answer.

There was a pause between the two of them as they looked each other over. Both of them knew that there was
something on the other’s mind. Harry resisted the urge to see into Sean’s mind, he had enough on his own, such as the
fact that Voldemort was again invading his mind, and that he had been able to stop him this time.

“Get some rest Potter,” Sean said, “we have a full day in the morning.”
Chapter 14: The First Step

“Wake up” Harry heard the monotone Irish voice he was coming to know better and better say to him as Sean shook him awake.

“It’s barely light out,” Harry said as he put on his glasses.

“Precisely” Sean said, “By waking up at first light, we get the most out of the day.”

As he spoke, Sean threw Harry the black pants and tank top and training robe that had been provided for him. Sean had already changed into his training clothes, while Harry changed into his own, Sean tied his note to Lupin around Regal’s leg, gave him something to eat, and sent him on his way.

After Harry had finished, Sean began to speak. “Even a journey of one thousand miles begins with the first step…and now we will both take that step towards our different ends.”

“Isn’t it just me taking the first step here,” Harry asked in a respectful tone.

“When you go to battle Voldemort,” Sean began, “he will most likely be in the company of the head vampire. It is my destiny to destroy him. When I do that, the weaker vampires will all die, and the stronger ones will be severely crippled.”

“I thought you said that our future and destiny were our own choice?” Harry asked.

“I made this choice a long time ago,” Sean responded, “and I will see it through.”

The next thing Sean did took Harry completely by surprise, he handed him a pot filled with dirt.

“What’s this?” Harry asked Sean inquisitively.

“This,” Sean answered, “is what separates us from the wicked demons we hunt and destroy. This…is a life.”

Harry was still noticeably confused, so Sean chose to elaborate.

“Underneath this dirt is a plant, and part of your training will be to care for it. This will help you remember how sacred life is, it will help you remember that it takes so much more skill and patience to create a life rather than end one.”

Harry was beginning to understand, “Voldemort doesn’t care about life, he only seeks to prolong his own and end the lives of those who oppose him.”

“That is correct,” Sean answered Harry, “and as you are learning to kill, it is important that you learn to preserve as well.”

Now Harry realized that Sean really was a kindred spirit. Orphaned and robbed of a childhood at a young age, given a destiny that he couldn’t escape, taken and trained to fight the evil powers in the world…and yet he somehow had come to care for life.

“Let’s get started” Harry said with quiet and dignified enthusiasm.

“Follow me,” Sean said as he exited the room.

It was about five in the morning when they started out, and they would be spending the better part of the day in the outdoor portion of the monastery. They started with warm-ups, Sean did his fifty knuckle push-ups and Harry looked at him with wide eyes.
“You have done push-ups before haven’t you?” Sean asked Harry.
Harry tried a few push-ups on his knuckles but soon found that he was nowhere near the conditioning of Sean.
Harry dropped onto his stomach and was breathing heavily, when Sean said, “Do ten more.”
“What?” Harry asked between exhausted breaths.
“Ten more” Sean reiterated.
“I can’t” Harry stated with an exhausted voice.
“Then the Dark Lord has already won” Sean reiterated.
“What do you mean?” Harry asked.
“If you are not willing to do what is necessary, and then some, if simply doing ten more push-ups is too much, then there is no way you will be able to defeat him.”
Harry realized what Sean was doing with this, and he further realized that he was right. Harry began to do more push-ups, but after he had done ten, Sean told him to do more.
“Why?” Harry asked.
“I said ten, and I mean ten by my count.”
Harry would count ten to himself, but then he would hear Sean count, “one…one…one…two…two…two…two…”
Harry had done fifty knuckle push-ups by the time Sean finally said “ten.”
“Not bad Potter” Sean said, “How do you feel…because we’re just warming up.”
Harry managed to struggle through the rest of the warm-up, Sean was the same for every exercise…even the split, where he pushed down on Harry’s shoulders to force him into the full position. At the end Sean once again asked Harry how he felt.
“I need a break.” Harry said in an exhausted voice.
“Really?” Sean replied. And immediately after that Sean struck Harry with a sharp kick to the sternum followed by a foot sweep and then Sean dropping to the ground and hitting Harry right at the bridge of his nose, breaking his nose and glasses. Harry was grimacing and almost crying with pain when Sean spoke.
“The Dark Lord will not care how tired you are or what you can and cannot do,” Sean began with a very serious tone. “Now get up, fix your nose and glasses, and we’ll begin with the combat training.”
Harry wasn’t sure how to respond to what had just happened, he had never been beaten down like that before, but what Sean said had made all the sense in the world.
“Occulus reparo” Harry said as he waved his wand at his glasses and they mended, he then used a mendo charm on his nose and was ready. After Harry had fixed his glasses, he stood back up to face Sean.
“The way of fighting I am about to teach you is something I have accumulated in various countries and with different teachers. When you couple this with the modes of thought I have taught you and learn to be fluid and to adapt yourself to any particular opponent or situation…you will be unbeatable.”
“I like that part,” Harry said to Sean.

“You may do well to listen to the new knight,” Sean said with a smile. “Then I shall have no trouble encouraging you to listen and obey.”

Sean first taught Harry how to punch, the best way to make a fist, to hit with the bone, to grip his teeth instead of tucking in his lip or lips, and how to distribute his weight. Then he taught him how to kick, with emphasis on how to place his weight and to strike with the ball of his foot or the heel and to point his toes outward. He taught him how to drop and to perform a foot sweep, and then he began to teach him combinations.

They trained long and hard, stopping only for meals. Sean informed Harry that breakfast and lunch would be the same everyday just like dinner. Breakfast consisted of oatmeal and orange juice. Lunch was apples, bread, and a serving of meat with milk. Just like with dinner, they ate their meals in the outside area with the other knights in training. Many of them would come and talk to Sean, and Harry was finding it easier to see the respect that they had for Sean showing in their actions.

Many times, Daniel would come and eat with them. Daniel would often ask Harry questions about magic and about the wizarding world. Other knights were also interested in this and asked Harry if he could show them some magic. Reluctantly, Harry had to convince them that he was not allowed to do magic outside of Hogwarts until after he graduated, and that he had put his wand away for while he was training, but he did settle a few times for showing them some basic spells that he could do without his wand, like the accio charm.

The entire monastery and Order of St. George were buzzing about the possibility of working with the magical world again, and Daniel would often talk to Sean about the Sagart’s wishes and ambitions with the wizarding world.

“So does it look like we will be working with the magical beings again like in the old days?” Daniel asked Sean.

“If all goes well I don’t see why not!” Sean said with a glimmer of optimism to his voice.

“But,” Sean continued, “that depends on the boy here and how well he does. And speaking of which, it’s time to get back to training.”

With that the wizard and the knight set back to the training grounds. Once there, Sean taught Harry more combinations, and then he posed a challenge to Harry.

“Since you need to be ready so soon, I suggest we start full-body sparring.”

“Okay” Harry said even though he did not know what sparring was.

He learned the hard way that afternoon. Sean got into his fighting stance. With his left side facing Harry, he had his left leg forward slightly with his heel turned outward, his right leg extended behind him with his heel raised above the ground. His chin was almost directly on his left collarbone, his left arm was across his body with the fist at his right hip, and his right arm was up with his right palm facing Harry.

“Fight!” Sean bellowed from where he stood facing an unsuspecting Harry. Sean launched himself forward and brought his left leg straight up catching Harry squarely on his chin. Sean paused at this, remembering that Harry was new at this, but remembering that he had to learn quickly and effectively.

“You must fight back,” Sean said to Harry, “remember that there is no wrong way, as long as it is effective.”

Harry tried to block Sean, he tried to strike him, and he tried to remember what he had been taught. But Sean was far too quick, too strong, and executed his actions with surgical precision and without having to think about it.

“Thought to fist,” he reminded Harry, “takes far too much time than you can spare.”
To drive his point home, Sean struck Harry with several kicks and punches to his head, throat, chest, and ribs. Harry stumbled back with a broken arm after Sean grabbed it with one hand and broke it by bringing it around his own neck causing Harry to plead, "no more, please, let me heal my arm."

Sean responded with a turnaround heel kick to the head, "do you think Snape, or LeStrange, or the Dark Lord himself will stop to allow you to heal yourself?"

A rage welled up in Harry, a rage at Sean for realizing that he was right, and that he wasn't below playing the bad guy to drive that point home to Harry. Harry muttered a quick "mendo" onto his arm. He then, forgetting what Hermione had told him about not using the repaired body part for a while, got to his feet and charged at Sean. Harry attacked in a blind rage, he swung sloppily at Sean with several punches and a few kicks, all of which Sean blocked or parried around effortlessly.

After Harry threw one punch, Sean moved to the side to dodge it then grabbed the arm with both of his hands and brought it around Harry. Sean stood behind Harry, still clutching Harry's arm so that it was across his body.

"You have anger," Sean said, "but anger is a double-edged sword that can be used just as easily against you as it can benefit you."

Harry attacked again with the same blind rage, but was halted when Sean broke Harry's other arm in the same fashion he had earlier.

"Fix your arm and learn to control your anger, fight with emotional content, but without your anger blinding you!" Harry obeyed and paused to clear his mind.

They fought for a little longer, Harry was already pretty agile and quick from his Quidditch training, and Sean knew that with a little more training Harry would be a very great and formidable fighter. Sean was holding back, but Harry was struggling to keep up with him just the same. Harry decided to refrain from using his illegumency skills to map out Sean's mind for attacks because he realized that he needed to learn without shortcuts, and that Sean had obviously cleared his mind so he wouldn't find anything anyway.

That evening, they sparred some more, and then Sean called a stop to talk to Harry.

"How do you feel?" Sean asked him.

"I'm half-dead" Harry responded very matter of factly.

"Good" Sean said, "if you train until you're half dead, you won't become all dead when you are in combat."

"Yeah" Harry said in response.

Sean talked with Harry for a few minutes longer, making sure he understood that he was only being taught basics and that he would be expecting him to be coming up with his own means of fighting, incorporating his own insight into what Sean was teaching.

"Come," Sean said to Harry, "I want to show you something."

Sean took Harry up to one of the parapets that were at the front of the monastery. From the parapet, all the land around the cliff could be seen. Sean then pointed to a dense woodland area that was on top of another cliff, separated from the monastery cliff by a strip of the sea, and spoke to Harry.

"There was a time when wizards and the Knights worked hand in hand. Those woods over there are something one of them gave for the training of the Knights." Harry was wondering why Sean was showing him this and telling him about wizards of the past.
“A wizard gave the Order woods?” Harry asked.

“The woods were there before,” Sean answered, “but he put a special enchantment on them.”

Harry was intent on hearing what Sean had to say.

“Between the enchantment and some efforts made by some of the Knights. Those woods have become the final challenge of a Knights training. If one can obtain a certain plant that grows in the middle of those woods, then they are ready.”

“How does that prove they are ready?” Harry asked.

“It tests strength, integrity, endurance, courage, and dedication.”

Sean paused before continuing, “The first test is strength and endurance, and it is done by climbing the rope that leads up to the woods…”

“I can understand the strength part,” Harry started, “but how does integrity fit into it?”

“You have to have the integrity to climb up using only your arms and not weaseling up with your legs.” Sean continued, “the journey to the center is four miles of altering terrain, and running there tests endurance. The enchantment begins in the middle, when you are faced with your worst memory and then your worst fear. The ability to overcome what you fear the most and getting through your most harrowing experience tests bravery. Dedication is tested by going through with the process and then continuing with the oaths taken for the rest of your life.”

Harry looked at the woods with interest; he was imagining a wizard like Dumbledore putting the enchantment on the woods. He had a question for Sean, “did you ever go through those woods?”

“Aye” Sean answered, “and it was not an easy experience.”

Comprehension dawned on Harry when he noticed how Sean was looking at him, and remembered the pervasive use of ‘you.’ “You want me to go through that wood.” Harry said to Sean.

“Aye,” Sean answered, “when you’re ready…and we will leave here after you have gone through the wood.”

Harry now knew that what he said that day so long ago was true. He would be with Sean at that monastery for as long as it would take.
Chapter 15: Ginny’s Confession
Hermione Granger and Ginny Weasley had become like sisters over the past few weeks at 12 Grimmauld Place. They did everything together, including helping the Order find information on the different creatures Voldemort was using and how to fight them. Since they were the only children living at Grimmauld and the fact that they were both teenage girls, they gravitated towards each other greatly. They took care of Hedwig together, and they shared their secrets with each other.

One night the two of them heard the familiar sound of a falcon’s cry when they saw Regal perched on the top windowsill.

“Regal!” Hermione and Ginny both said with joy. Ginny loved it whenever Regal arrived because it was something that made her think of Sean, Hermione loved it because it meant that Harry was doing well and learning much. It had been nearly a month since Harry and Sean had left, and Regal’s visits were very anticipated.

Lupin was kind enough to inform the Grangers and Weasleys about how Harry was doing. He was also becoming more and more confident about his relationship with Tonks, and was much more affectionate with her. The Grangers and Weasleys were becoming very close and had become great friends, the two of them almost wished that Hermione would give up on Harry and marry one of the Weasley boys so that they would become in-laws. Hermione and Ginny were especially very close, they would both do research to help the Order of the Phoenix and would afterwards often settle down on a couch in the living room to relax and talk.

They were doing so one day after a long session of research. The two of them were exhausted but were contented to stay up for a little while longer. Although she wanted to, Hermione had not told Ginny about her and Harry and what had happened in the few days before Harry had left with the Knight of St. George.

She knew that Ginny deserved to know, they were best friends, “and best friends don’t keep secrets like this” Hermione had reasoned to herself. Running her fingers along the golden bracelet that decorated her left wrist, Hermione took a deep breath and began to speak. “Ginny?” Hermione began with nervousness in her voice, “there’s something I need to tell…"

Ginny tensed slightly at this, she had noticed the nervous tone in Hermione’s voice and was anticipating something bad. A myriad of possibilities raced through Ginny’s mind as to what the confession would be, “maybe she’s been using Regal to communicate with Harry,” “maybe she’s found something bad about Inferi or vampires,” “or maybe…” Ginny stopped herself long enough to answer, “Okay, tell me.”

“Well,” Hermione began, not sure how exactly to get to the point. She decided on the direct approach, “At the Burrow before the wedding...Harry and I kissed.”

She blurted out the last four words to this quite fast, wanting to get it out before she could stop herself. She looked at her best friend in an attempt to see her reaction. Ginny stared blankly at first, and then a smile came across her face.

“Oh wow, I am so happy for you!” Ginny squealed with enthusiasm.

“You mean, you aren’t jealous, or angry?” Hermione questioned her friend in disbelief as to the lack of hostility she was feeling from her.

“Oh please” Ginny responded with a tone that suggested that she had just said something blatantly obvious. “Ever since my first year I knew that the two of you liked each other. I just wonder why the bloody hell it took you two so long to see it.”
Realization dawned on Hermione that it probably had been obvious to observers. “I suppose,” Hermione began trying to explain, “that we didn’t realize because we were so young when we met. And we started out as friends, I guess it just took us a while to put two and two together and then act on it.”

Ginny nodded in understanding before asking, “so how was it?”

The next thirty minutes were spent with Hermione recounting her experiences with Harry in the few days they had had together before he left with Sean. They laughed and giggled at Hermione’s stories like a couple of little schoolgirls and they were enjoying every moment of it.

Ginny’s expression changed to one of awe when Hermione told her about the bracelet and showed it to her; “that is so romantic” Ginny responded.

After Hermione talked about the morning Harry had left, she paused and noticed how Ginny’s expression changed whenever Sean was mentioned. “Oh my gosh,” Hermione thought to herself as she realized, “I think she’s in love with him.”

Hermione thought that it would be good for Ginny to express whatever her feelings were, she decided to start off slowly.

“So,” Hermione said, “if you could do that dance at the wedding over again what would you do differently?”

“Well,” Ginny began, “I probably would have said something different than ‘does it hurt when you do the splits?’ and ‘why are you dressed like that?’”

“I know how you feel,” Hermione said, “I wish I had had that fireplace talk with Harry back in fifth year.” Ginny stopped and got a look on her face that Hermione could not place. “Ginny are you alright?” Hermione asked with a hint of concern in her voice.

Ginny paused before taking a deep breath and beginning to speak to her best friend.

“As long as we’re confessing things,” Ginny began with a monotone voice that conveyed her being nervous, “there is something I should tell you.”

Hermione paused, she was expecting something about Sean, but what Ginny would say would surprise even Hermione.

“Do you remember that night when I insisted on going in with Sean to look to the horses?” Hermione nodded and Ginny continued, “well, something happened.” Ginny then began to recount to Hermione what happened that night between her and the Knight.

It was still light outside when they came to the horses. They felt relaxed after the break they took when they had finished with the preparations for the wedding that would take place the next day. Sean gave the horses some water and began to stroke their manes. Ginny just stood back and pretended to be admiring the beautiful brown and black stallions, but was really gazing at the young man giving them water and admiring how tender he was around the animals.

Ginny had to say something; the silence was driving her mad.

“You have to say something,” she blushed when Sean turned to face her as he gave his answer.

“The brown one is called Cuchulainn,” Sean then faced the brown stallion and stroked its mane, “and he has been my companion and friend for many years now.” Ginny breathed out an affectionate sigh before Sean continued. “And this one,” he said pointing to the black one, “My friend and comrade Daniel Fianagan has graciously let me borrow, and his name is Collins. Named for the man who helped to lead our country to independence not too long ago.”

The two of them did not speak for a while as Sean went back to tending to the animals and Ginny tried to help as much as she could, since she was admiring him so much.
“Ginerva?” Sean asked breaking Ginny out of her revelry.

“Yes” she asked after she snapped out of it.

“Would you please hand me those cans of oats over there?” Sean pointed to some cans that were full of oats for the horses, the horses were very good but had to be fed and watered at certain times to ensure their effectiveness.

Ginny picked up the cans and handed them to Sean, as Sean reached for them, their hands touched.

It was only for the briefest of moments, but both of them were completely taken for a time. Ginny was taking into effect that she had touched him; her mind was immediately taking in everything about that touch. It was taking in the hard and calloused feel of his hands, the warmth behind them, and the question of how he could be so gentle and tender with such strong hands.

For Sean, this was the first time he had ever touched a woman in any way but a handshake or formal greeting, other than his mother, that he didn’t have to kill later, and his mind was going at one hundred miles an hour at the new sensation.

Sean came back to reality after a brief moment and thanked Ginny for her help. He then asked her if she knew how to brush a horse, when she said yes, he asked her to tend to the brown horse and he would clean the black one. Ginny did not fail to realize that Sean was having her clean his horse and wondered if there was something implied by that.

After a few minutes of brushing the horse, Ginny decided to try and engage in some small talk. “How old are you?” she asked Sean.

“Twenty-one” he said matter of factly and continued brushing his horse.

“Are you married?” Ginny had a hint of nervousness in her voice as she asked this question.

Sean paused and turned to look at Ginny. “I am a member of a monastic order” he said in a kind and patient voice, “and we practice celibacy.”

Whatever hopes Ginny had began to crumble and fade away, she had met the man of every woman’s dreams and he was untouchable.

“Why would you want to live your whole life without…” Ginny began and paused but said the last word in a hushed tone “love.”

Ginny turned her face down and looked at the ground, but then she felt a strong index finger lightly bring her up to face the man with whom she was becoming more and more infatuated with.

“In the Order” Sean began in a tender and calm voice, “we devote ourselves to an ideal that is higher than anything else we could hope for in this life...with the exception of marriage.”

Ginny was slightly confused and not sure where he was going with this, but Sean continued.

“Most of the men join after they have been married. But some, like me, are brought in at a young age. Most of the time, we serve until we die. But very rarely, a Knight will be relieved of his oaths and be allowed to go into the world.”

Ginny was a bit underwhelmed to hear this, but at the same time she was hopeful that there was a chance that she could end up with the man she was falling in love with. She didn’t care that Sean was five years older than she was, that was about the same age difference as Bill and Fleur, and she hoped that she could one day live happily ever after with her handsome Knight.

“Do you think you will ever be relieved of your oaths?” Ginny asked.
“If by some miracle I do,” Sean said, “I intend to return to Ireland and live the kind of life God would have me live.”

If Ginny was infatuated with him before, she was falling in love with him now. He was like something out of the storybooks her mum would read to her when she was a little girl. The only thing different was that Sean had short hair unlike the princes in the books that were shown with long hair.

In that moment, as she looked at her handsome knight, she knew that she would never meet a better man, and she wanted to spend the rest of her life with him and never look back.

“…And then mum called us in for dinner” Ginny finished telling the story to Hermione, who was now looking at Ginny with a look that simultaneously suggested happiness, awe, and concern.

“Do you love him?” Hermione asked her friend.

Ginny paused for a moment to think. “All I know is that before I knew about him being a knight and a vampire hunter I was quite fond of him. Then, after I danced with him and learned more about him…” Ginny started to stray off as a wistful look crossed her face but then reverted to one of almost despair.

“I am still so confused…” Ginny began before stopping.

“About Sean?” Hermione asked finishing Ginny’s thought.

“Yes” Ginny said, having lost all desire to pretend anymore, she needed to get everything out, and she felt she could trust Hermione.

“I think I am in love with him, and that this is for real.” Hermione knew why this was a big deal for Ginny, she had many inhibitions about falling for Sean and was nervous that she was in love with him for real, not like with all her previous flings at Hogwarts.

“But,” Hermione started, “you are probably thinking about his age, and his profession, the fact that he’s a Muggle?”

“I keep thinking about all that stuff,” Ginny started, “but the more I think about all the reasons I shouldn’t fall for him…the more ridiculous they seem. I just keep thinking about the dance, about how he’s so handsome and cavalier, when he touched my hand under those trees, the fact that he doesn’t wear shining armor…but that he’s a real knight, and then I just want to run away with him to wherever he goes.”

“You don’t know what it’s like to be in love with someone, and know the two of you can never be together.”

Ginny was beginning to cry, Hermione knew that Ginny had to vent, so she didn’t try to stop her, she merely moved next to her and wrapped an arm around her friend.

“Harry was never completely out of your league, it was just unlikely for a time.”

“Wotcher Ginny,” Tonks had appeared behind them and now had a hand on Ginny’s shoulder comforting her, “the man I’m in love with is older, poor, dangerous, and devoted to a sacred Order as well.”

They had a good laugh at this for a while before Tonks continued. “Do your parents know how you feel?”

“No,” Ginny answered, “I wouldn’t know how to start or how to tell them about it, or how to respond to what they might say, or…”

Tonks cut her off. “Sometimes talking can be like…well, magic, just starting is the hardest part, but then it can go on to exactly what it needs to be.”
Tonks and Hermione helped Ginny realize that if she was going to confess her feelings for Sean to anyone, she had to do so to her mother.

Ginny eventually agreed, and then went looking for her mother. It was the early evening, and Mr. Weasley was still at work, the Ministry was working harder than ever after Voldemort’s activities had increased. Ginny found her mum sewing some blankets, with all that was going on; Mrs. Weasley had found sewing to be relaxing therapy.

“Mum,” Ginny began with a slight hint of nervousness in her voice.

“Hello little girl,” Mrs. Weasley said affectionately, “Have you come to help your old mum with her knitting.”

Ginny knew this was the time to start, but she chickened out, “sure, I’d love to help you with the sewing.”

They talked and sewed for a while, they talked about how happy Bill had been when he had come to his first Order meeting after getting back from his honeymoon.

“He did look very happy, happier than I have ever seen him,” Mrs. Weasley said. “Are you looking forward to returning to Hogwarts?” she asked her daughter.

“It will be strange going back this time,” Ginny started, “with Dumbledore gone, and this battle that is coming up at the feast. But I am sure that if the best happens and we all survive, that this will be the best year ever.”

“I am glad to hear you talking so optimistically,” Mrs. Weasley said, “my brave little girl.” Ginny looked over to see her mum beaming with tremendous pride, and her eyes were on the verge of tears.

“Mum, don’t cry” Ginny said.

“I can’t really help it,” Mrs. Weasley said, “all my little children are so grown up…and so much has happened.” Ginny remained quiet for a while and went back to knitting.

After a while, Ginny could no longer take the silence and decided it was time to confess.

“Mum, there is something that I wanted to talk to you about, or rather tell you.”

“Oh,” Mrs. Weasley said putting down her knitting supplies and getting ready to give parental advice to her youngest child and only daughter. “Go on Ginny.”

Ginny took a deep breath, this was it, “I think I’m in love!” she blurted to her mum.

“Someone new?” her mum asked with sincere curiosity.

“Yes” Ginny answered, “but you have met him.”

“It’s Bill’s friend Sean isn’t it?” Mrs. Weasley said. Ginny didn’t know how to respond to this or how her mum could have known.

“Am I that obvious?” Ginny answered trying to lighten the mood and have her and her mum talking in a friendly way because she was sure that the conversation was going to turn ugly.

“We saw you at the wedding” Mrs. Weasley said, “and it was obvious to anyone that you were very much in love with him.” Ginny stopped and supposed that she hadn’t masked her feelings at all. But now she wanted to vent her frustrations.

“The thing I hate about all this is that…I know that we can never be together” Ginny was starting to cry again. “He’s too old, he’s a Muggle and I’m a witch, he’s a monk who travels the world fighting demons. I try to just accept it and move on,
but then I think about how cavalier and wonderful he is, that he’s a real knight, and I think about that dance, and when we touched hands feeding the horses.”

Ginny was crying very hard at this point, and had moved over to where her mum was sitting and kneeled on the ground as she sobbed into her leg.

“There, there” Mrs. Weasley said as she held her crying daughter, “it took a lot of courage for you to confess this to anyone.” Mrs. Weasley paused before continuing, “and you must not be so quick to abandon hope, if it is meant to be, love will find a way. Because love conquers all.”

Ginny sniffed as she raised her head to look into her mother’s face, “really?”

“Absolutely,” Mrs. Weasley stated, “I remember with your father and I.” Mrs. Weasley paused and a slight blush rose to her face.

“What?” Ginny started enthusiastically, “tell me more.” Mrs. Weasley then began to tell Ginny about meeting her father and just knowing that he was the one. Ginny had only heard her mother talk about her and Arthur as being made for each other and eloping….she had never heard any kind of details.

“It was so strange at the time, I always thought that I would meet some kind of fairy tale knight in shining armor and he would sweep me off my feet. And then some wonderful normal wizard came and swept me off my feet without my even knowing it.”

“That’s so romantic,” Ginny said to her mum with an almost far off dreamy tone. “So,” she continued to her mum, “you’re saying that I need to forget Sean because the fairy tale ending doesn’t happen and I should look for a normal wizard.”

Ginny was a little disappointed at this, she and every other girl dreamed of the Prince Charming ideal, and Ginny had actually met and fallen for a man who fit the bill.

“I didn’t say that,” Mrs. Weasley responded. “If you want to know what I think, I think it’s wonderful that you have met a real life Prince Charming…a knight in shining armor, even though he doesn’t literally have the armor. I believe that you should not give up hope, that one day love will find a way to bring you and that wonderful young man together.”

Mrs. Weasley raised her daughter’s head to look into her eyes, “and when it does, your father and I give you and your knight in shining armor our blessing.”

“Oh thank you mum!” Ginny squealed with delight as she hugged her mum tightly.

Ginny looked at the time and then turned back to her mum, “I should be going to bed now, who knows what may happen tomorrow.”

“Good night then darling” Mrs. Weasley said to her daughter.

“Thanks again for listening and helping mum.”

“You can talk to me anytime, I’m your mum.” Mrs. Weasley hugged her daughter and decided to end the night on a happy note. “Just remember that if you don’t go after him I will.” Ginny laughed and went off to bed.

Mrs. Weasley stayed awake for a little while longer waiting for her husband. He apparated into the living room about an hour later and kissed his wife hello. “You really didn’t have to stay up waiting for me, I’m sure the others have all gone to bed.

“Arthur” Mrs. Weasley began with a serious tone, “our little girl opened up to me about something and I think we need to talk about it.” Mrs. Weasley then told her husband what Ginny had told her and what she had said in response.
“You still remember what we said at the wedding?” Mr. Weasley asked his wife with a surprised tone.

“Of course I do, that’s why I told her she would have our blessing...” Mrs. Weasley paused at this, she wondered if she should tell her husband all that she had told Ginny.

“You might as well tell me what you were on the verge of saying, because you know I will find out sooner or later,” Mr. Weasley said to his wife.

Mrs. Weasley realized that she wasn’t going to get out of this without admitting what she said to their daughter earlier. “I told our little girl that when love finds a way to bring her and her brave, handsome knight together that they will have our blessing.”

Mr. Weasley contemplated what was said, it had been enough for him to grasp the concept of his daughter or his sons not surviving past the welcome feast of their next year at Hogwarts. Now, he was faced with the reality that his little girl was growing up and that he would one day have to give her away, now he understood what Jacques felt like at the wedding.

“We don’t know if she will survive the battle that is coming” Mr. Weasley began with a somber tone. “And it could be bad to get her hopes for the future up only to be dashed,” Mrs. Weasley interrupted him at this point.

“We support Nymphadora and her efforts with Remus, so why not our own daughter!”

Mr. Weasley, taken aback by the sudden venom in his wife’s voice, sorted through his thoughts.

“I suppose the only thing to do is be supportive and hope that it all works out for the best.”

“Yes dear,” Mrs. Weasley answered her husband affectionately. With that, they went upstairs to their room and retired for the evening.
Chapter 16: R.A.B.

It had been a little over a month and a half since Sean had begun training Harry, and the two of them had been making enormous progress. Harry took to Sean’s instruction like a fish in water, listening intently and following instructions to the very letter. Sean and the other Knights were impressed and taking notice of Harry’s progress. Harry was now very proficient in unarmed combat, and Sean had plans for him.

Harry was beginning to wake up at first light on his own and would normally spend a few minutes caring for his plant before meeting Sean in the outdoor part of the monastery. Harry was finding that Sean was right about the plant, he had learned to better appreciate life, and had learned how much more skill it took to sustain life rather than take it. He had learned to control his anger, and could empty his mind in an instant.

Harry was becoming exactly what Bill and Sean had hoped he would. A firm, toned, and athletic figure, like that of Sean, had replaced his lean figure. If it hadn’t have been for the different hair, Harry’s was down to his shoulder blades and Sean’s was to the bottom of his neck because the custom during training was to let the hair grow out, and eyes, Harry wearing glasses, and his being about two inches taller than Sean, they would have looked almost identical. Harry was also beginning to have a more serious disposition, he was becoming like Sean. Sean curved this change by asking Harry to tell him about his life, his hopes for the future, and the girl he left behind among other things.

One morning Harry came to the outdoor portion of the monastery to find Sean performing a kata to conclude his warm up. Harry looked and saw an array of wooden swords lying on the ground nearby.

“I’ve never seen these here before” Harry said to Sean indicating the swords and knives.

“I believe you are ready to learn the sword and to use side weapons” Sean answered.

Harry made a slight bow to Sean to show his readiness to learn and be instructed. Sean explained to Harry that these weapons were made of wood so as to spar without danger of inadvertently hurting or killing the partner. He also said that it would be advantageous because the wooden weapons had been made to be the same weight as their metal counterparts.

“The only difference” Sean said “is that the metal ones kill.”

The first day Harry had arrived at the monastery, he had noticed most of the other Knights using firearms. He had noticed though that the closest thing Sean ever wielded was his crossbow.

“Why don’t you ever use guns?” Harry asked Sean.

Sean answered, “I was taught to reverence what it is to fight, and I believe using a weapon where you can just shoot someone from several hundred feet away lessens what it is to fight and die. Also, I am a vampire hunter, and the only sure way to kill any vampire is by thrusting it through the heart, or cutting off it’s head.”

Harry nodded at this and began to tie his hair back in a ponytail as Sean prepared to continue.

Sean announced that they were beginning when he said “Pick any one sword you like and we will get started.”

Harry nodded and picked up a wooden sword shaped like a katana. For the rest of that day Sean showed Harry how to parry and maneuver with the sword. He also showed him how to disarm an opponent, and lastly how to strike, attack, and kill.

“You’re focusing on me,” Sean said to Harry while he was teaching him how to defend, “you have to remember, whether
defending or attacking, focus on the hilt of your enemy’s sword. The hilt, and when you can, your enemy’s eyes, as the hilt goes so will the blade, and when his eyes show fear or uncertainty...go for the kill.”

Over the next several days Harry and Sean settled into a routine of unarmed combat training, armed combat training with Harry learning how to fight with blades and practicing incorporating his wand and magic into his fighting, and meals. Harry still always kept the fake horcrux with him. It helped him remember that he owed it to Dumbledore, Sirius, his parents, and all the other people who had given their lives to get him to this point.

One night as they finished their training, Harry was getting ready to go and eat dinner when Sean called out to him.

“After we eat, we will be leaving the monastery grounds temporarily. There is something that I want to teach you.”

“Okay” Harry answered with a hint of surprise and an inner curiosity. He wondered what Sean wanted to teach him, and he was looking forward to leaving the monastery grounds for a little while.

It reminded him of the trips to Hogsmeade back when he was at school, and that brought back happy memories.

“If I make it back,” Harry thought to himself, “I am going to take Hermione out to Hogsmeade and get her something nice.”

After Harry and Sean finished their usual dinner, the two of them made their way to the massive gate. It was opened, and the two of them walked a short distance away from the monastery. After a while, Sean motioned for Harry to sit down and he did so. Sean then pointed to the sky and Harry looked up to see more stars then he had ever seen before in his life. There were no lights of any kind around them, and the only light was that of the stars and the moon in the sky.

After a little while, Sean spoke, “what do the stars mean to you?”

“I had a professor at Hogwarts who taught us that the future is written in the stars” Harry said in response.

“That is not true,” Sean stated, “we choose our own future and destiny, nothing is written, and by that I mean carved in stone. You couldn’t choose Voldemort killing your parents, but what you have done since then has been your choice...regardless of what circumstances drove you to it.”

Harry said nothing, he merely continued looking at the sky, and he remembered the last time he had looked at the stars. “They’re very beautiful.” she had said to him before they nearly consummated their relationship. “What do they mean?” Harry asked Sean.

“The stars?” Sean asked back receiving a nod from Harry.

“Many different peoples have come up with their own explanations. Science of course tells us that they are balls of gas, but I like to think of the explanation that the ancient Greeks came up with.”

“And what was that?” Harry asked with genuine interest.

Sean began his explanation, “Many other groups had similar explanations, but the Greeks believed that the Gods would immortalize the great heroes in the stars, that the stars were a never-ending memorial to the honored dead.”

Sean paused and looked at Harry, “I’m sure that your parents have a proper memorial up there in those stars somewhere, and I’m sure they’re watching you with pride, you are a hero, and your own memorial awaits your arrival up there.”

Harry looked back at Sean with a new admiration and respect. “I’m sure that you have a memorial of your own waiting for you” Harry said to Sean.

“Ha” Sean scoffed, “I am no hero, I’m just a man striving to fulfill his purpose.”
“And what purpose is that?” Harry asked.

“I have none in this life…the Order gives me my purpose.” Sean stopped and had a look of grim resolution on his face that Harry could make out by the light of the half moon in the sky.

They made their way back to the monastery after that and later as Sean was writing another note to Lupin, Harry took a watering can and began to carefully water his plant. He had been taking great care of it, and it had grown to a pleasant looking fern.

After he finished his note to Lupin, Sean looked over to see Harry looking at the fake horcrux that he still carried with him.

“What is that?” Sean asked Harry.

Harry then told Sean about the entire ordeal with Dumbledore and the cave. He ended talking about Snape’s murdering Dumbledore and making his escape.

“The next time you face Snape,” Sean said, “you will be ready, and you will defeat him.” Harry suddenly felt the desire to tell Sean something else about the fake horcrux.

“There’s also this” Harry then opened the locket and showed Sean the note. Sean read it and then got a surprised look on his face.

“What does R.A.B. stand for?” Sean asked Harry in a tone that reflected his surprise and intrigue.

“I don’t know,” Harry said, “that was something I was planning on finding out over the summer.”

“I think that I know who it was” Sean said.

“Who do you think it is?” Harry asked Sean.

Sean began to speak, as he did he found the real Slytherin locket and held it up. “I found this during a recent assignment in Romania when I was trying to find the head vampire. I had a lead that he would be there, and the lead turned out to be a trap.”

Harry was looking at Sean intently, waiting for him to continue the story. “After I defeated the vampires that were there to kill me, I discovered that he had been there and was planning on destroying this locket. Quite dangerous since it risked his exposure to a trained Knight. The head vampire’s birth name is Raiganzeti Adrian Bognar.”

“You think he replaced the horcrux?” Harry said with surprise that it had been a vampire that had aided Voldemort, and Sean had been surprised to learn that the head vampire had been in leagues with Voldemort this long.

“Aye, I think so” Sean answered, “that would explain how those defenses you talked about got to be there at the cave; you would have gotten there about two weeks after I got the real locket.”

“Why didn’t you destroy it?” Harry asked.

“I didn’t know what it was…I figured I might need it later, turns out I was right.”

Harry now knew the answer to what had been plaguing him, he knew everyone that was responsible for Dumbledore’s death and the wasted effort the two of them had spent to collect one of the horcruxes.

“Our destinies are quite similar then” Harry said to Sean, “we both chose to go after the one who took our childhood from us. And now the two of them are in league.”
“This is another reason why Bill thought it would be good for us to work together,” Sean added to Harry. They both got ready for sleep. Sean knelt at his mat, made the sign of the cross, bowed, said some words in Latin, and was about to go to sleep when Harry asked him something.

“When can I go to the enchanted woods?”

“There are a few more things I want to teach you, and you need to become better with the sword. Then I will take you to the cliff and you will go up into the woods.”

“How long will that take?” Harry asked.

“I will teach you the last things tomorrow, and then it depends on you.” Harry nodded his acceptance and the two of them went to sleep.
Chapter 17: The Lethal Maneuvers

Harry and Sean woke up at first light and began their warm-ups. When they reached the outdoor area, Harry reached for the katana, but Sean stopped him, “get the straight sword first” he said.

Harry obeyed without question, wondering why there was a slit in the blade of the sword. He had come to address Sean as master now, because he revered him as such. Harry unsheathed his sword and waited for Sean.

“I am going to be teaching you a few moves with the sword that are very effective and lethal by nature. You must never use these except in a true life and death situation.”

“Yes master” Harry answered to his trusted friend and mentor.

Sean picked up his sword as Harry got into his fighting stance, with the sword held above his head with the right hand and the blade pointing towards Sean.

“I don’t know if you have wondered why there is a slit in the straight sword,” Sean waited for Harry to nod in response before continuing, “well now I will show you… I call this move the slit thrust.”

Sean instructed Harry on how to hold the blade so that the enemy’s sword would go through it and then he could swing the straight sword. He showed how this would disarm the enemy, and then leave an open lethal shot to the throat. He and Harry practiced this until Harry could perform it to Sean’s satisfaction.

Sean also showed Harry the reason for the slits in the knife that Harry had thought looked like teeth. He showed him how capturing an enemy’s sword in the space between two of the “teeth” enabled him to disarm the enemy… and then slit their throat.

“I call that move the bite of death,” Sean said to Harry. Sean then showed Harry the move he had used back at the creek some time ago.

“I call this the wand slit,” he said.

Harry practiced grabbing his wand, as Sean held it in his hand, bringing the wooden knife up as if to slice it in two, and then slitting Sean’s throat as he moved around behind him. Sean was satisfied with Harry’s ability at this after a few tries. He then paused and told Harry to get the swords. Harry obeyed and brought his teacher the wooden katana and the straight sword.

Sean told Harry to bring the katana over his own head and then bring it down as if to strike him on top of his head. Harry did so, as he did Sean brought his sword up to block the strike and then moved it so his sword was behind his head with Harry’s sword on top of it.

“Pay attention,” Sean said to Harry, “it would seem that you have the advantage…but appearances can be deceiving.”

Sean then pushed his sword up a little so that Harry’s sword moved up a fraction, Sean then spun around to the side where Harry’s sword was as it came down. Harry realized in an instant that Sean could have decapitated him without any trouble.

“When properly executed,” Sean began “this move is unstoppable… which is why I call it the unstoppable.” Harry could instantly see the usefulness of this, and picked it up quickly.

Afterwards, Sean stopped to talk with Harry. “You have to remember not to make it a point to go for these moves,
because that will get you killed. But, you need to be able to recognize when the opportunity comes.”

As Sean finished talking, he and Harry were planning on retiring for the night. However, the Priest approached the two of them. Sean turned around and performed his usual bow, which Harry followed. The Priest motioned for them to rise and they did so.

“Sean” he said, “may I have a word with you?”

“Can this wait until morning?” Sean asked with a respectful tone.

“No,” the Priest responded, “you will come with me now.”

Sean nodded and then turned to Harry, “go on up and go to bed, I plan on having full days everyday until you have gone through the woods and completed the task.”

“Yes master.” Harry responded by making his right hand into a fist and bringing it into his left palm before making his way to Sean’s room.

The Priest brought Sean onto the balcony of his quarters once again. “The boy has been making enormous progress” the Sagart began in the usual Irish Gaelic that he and Sean spoke in their private conversations, “you have been doing an excellent job.”

“The boy was already in good shape before I ever taught him anything” Sean stated.

“Give yourself some credit” the Sagart interjected, “you have earned it. When do you think he will be ready for the final challenge?”

“I have taught him everything he needs to know,” Sean began to answer the Sagart, “all there is now is for him to master the teaching and I think he will have that in no more than two weeks.”

Sean continued without pausing “Is this what could not wait until morning Sagart?”

“No,” he answered, “I remember the day you began training the boy, you were up early washing your covers. And since then I have noticed that ever since you returned here, you have changed.”

Sean could sense where this was going, and who better to confess to than a priest?

“There is something that I should tell, it hasn’t interfered with the boy’s training, or with the mission coming up, but I feel it necessary to confess nonetheless.”

Sean then told the Sagart about the wedding and the beautiful young girl who fancied him.

“My friend Bill’s sister, sixteen years old, and I was told by him and his wife that she fancied me. I shared a dance with her at the wedding celebration, and when she came to say goodbye to me before I left, she hugged me …nothing wrong with that I hope.”

“Not at all,” the Priest responded with a voice that showed compassion and concern.

“I didn’t think anything of it,” Sean began again, “but then the night before I began to teach the boy, I had a dream.”

Sean then told the Sagart about the dream in great detail, leaving nothing out in hopes that he could explain something, anything, to him.

“…Then she started putting her hands up my shirt and touching my bare skin underneath and I shot up on the mat” Sean en
“Why didn’t you tell me about this earlier?” the Sagart asked.

“When it wasn’t recurring or disruptive, I didn’t think it merited taking up your time” Sean answered.

The Sagart paused; he was beginning to grow concerned about the young man he had raised as his own from a boy. On the one hand, he was glad that Sean, considering what his life had been and that Molly, Ginny, Fleur, Hermione, and Tonks were the first women he had met that he hadn’t been sent to kill, had even been able to become infatuated.

On the other hand, he realized that these were feelings that normally run their course during adolescence, and that Sean was emotionally a thirteen year old in a twenty-one year old body. He spoke to the young man who was visibly worried and would have wanted a cigarette if he smoked.

“Sean, you remain a worthy young monk and knight, you have done nothing wrong. You are merely experiencing something that most people go through when they are teenagers…this is what others went through when you were in Japan learning ninjitsu.”

Sean was still scared at what he had confessed, “why do I feel this way, this isn’t normal or acceptable for one of the Order!”

“Listen to me,” the Sagart began saying to Sean with a firm but caring tone as he placed his hands on the young man’s shoulders, “this is completely normal, the only abnormality in this is that you are experiencing these feelings for the first time at your age.”

The Sagart was now trying desperately to calm Sean, who was breathing heavily and felt as through he would be damned for his impure dream and thoughts. The Sagart brought Sean in for an embrace, like one that a parent gives their child when they do something wrong to let the child know that the parent still loves them.

“Know that you haven’t done anything wrong, in the sight of God or man, and that if you survive the upcoming battle you will have to talk to this girl and sort out your feelings…especially since your destroying the head vampire will most likely merit being relieved from your oaths to the Order.”

Sean did not hesitate before answering, “I don’t think I will survive, but I will kill Raiganzi. In any case, I don’t want to be relieved from the Order.”

“It is good that your commitment runs that deep,” the Sagart began, “but you should have a mind that you will survive, there is so much more for you to accomplish and to become…and much of that lies outside of this monastery.”

The Sagart put his hands on Sean’s shoulders and looked deep into his Prussian blue eyes.

“I have seen you at your worst and at your best my son, and I want you to know that regardless of what happens, I am proud to say that at any point I have been your teacher,” the Sagart would say the last part almost pleadingly, “please believe my council now and do your best to survive.”

Sean performed his customary bow to his Sagart, the first person he saw after Raiganzi took his childhood…the one who gave him life after the part that mattered had been taken away. The Sagart bid him rise and informed him that he was dismissed, Sean thanked the Sagart and made to leave, but said one last thing.

“Sagart, after the battle, may I come back here for purification?”

“Of course” the Sagart answered with a smile noting Sean’s confident wording of the question.
Chapter 18: The Enchanted Woods

It had been a few weeks since Sean had taught Harry the lethal maneuvers…and Harry had been practicing them devotedly. Harry could now hold his own against Sean in armed and unarmed combat but could never beat him, and their sparring sessions would attract an audience.

They would move fast and strong, their fighting was something that the other Knights had never seen before. Sean’s fighting style was a combination of Japanese and Chinese martial arts, Muay Thai, and some brawling he had been taught in Ireland…and he had taught that to Harry.

There was no memorized form to how they fought, Sean was very adamant in teaching Harry to empty his mind and fight with a fluid and adaptable manner that no enemy would be able to define and overcome. When they would spar, those watching were treated to a show of power, precision, and speed like nothing that had been seen in their monastery…or maybe even the world. Harry would strike unthinkingly, but no longer blindly, and he had realized that he didn’t have to even say his magic incantations but only empty his mind, think them, and let the magic flow thorough and out of him.

As he tried to incorporate magic into his armed and unarmed combat, he found that he did not have to think before he did any spells. A little after that, he discovered he didn’t even have to say them…they just flowed out of him. He and Sean would now do full contact sparring and with unsheathed swords. Fully armed sparring, with Sean using his crossbow and Harry using magic, would have to be taken to outside the monastery and often resulted in Harry using mendo charms on himself and Sean…but only after the spar was finished.

It went on like this, then one day Sean and Harry were in the outdoor area facing a dummy that Sean had set up for Harry to practice the lethal maneuvers on. Sean would say one of the maneuvers, and Harry would do it to the dummy with a sword or knife. Sean put a wand-like twig on the arm for the wand slit, and other times would have a sword there.

“Wand slit,” Sean said, and Harry executed the move perfectly without hesitation. Harry did the same thing for the bite of death, slit thrust, and the unstoppable.

“Perfect!” Sean said to Harry without disguising his satisfaction, “You’ve become everything we hoped you would and then some…we will leave tomorrow.”

Harry was confused at this and asked Sean “Where?”

“To the enchanted woods of course” Sean answered, “and we still have a couple of weeks before the battle.”

Harry realized that this was the culmination of his training, and that after it he and Sean would most likely leave the monastery…and then he didn’t know what after that. Harry and Sean went to sleep that night knowing that tomorrow would change everything.

They both woke up at first light, “wear only your black clothes,” Sean said to Harry as he started to dress.

“You won’t need anything else, other than this.”

Sean gave Harry a very simple knife. Harry guessed it would only be good enough to get the plant from the woods. Harry and Sean left the monastery and repelled from the sidewall down to the coastline where a rowboat waited. Sean took the oars, explaining to Harry that he would need his strength, and began to row toward the cliff with the enchanted woods on top.

When they came beside the cliff they found the rope. Sean took the end of the rope and tied it to the holder for one of the oars.
“This is as far as I go,” Sean said to Harry, “I will be waiting here for you when you get back; start whenever you want to.”

Harry looked up to see that the climb had to be about fifty feet straight up. He took a breath, then jumped off the boat, grabbed the rope, and began to climb.

He let his legs dangle down and focused on bringing one hand over the other. His toned and strong arms would pull and tense with each movement, he would only look straight ahead and would will himself to go just one pull higher. Sean watched him from the boat and had nothing but confidence that he would make it. Harry willed himself up higher and higher on the rope, fighting the urge to let his legs take over and lessen the strain. He was so consumed with this that he almost fell of the rope when his hand gripped the top of the cliff, finding the rope tied around the thickest tree he had ever seen.

Sweat was dripping down his face as he took a few deep and hard breaths. He brought his other hand up to the cliff, and then pulled himself with a loud grunt to the top, never using his legs until he stood up. Sean had told Harry that he was allowed to take a moment to catch his breath. As he did so, Harry looked around for the trail Sean said led to the center, after a minute he found it. Harry took a few breaths, did a few stretches, and then took off running through the woods.

Sean had lost sight of Harry after he had pulled himself onto the top of the cliff. He silently hoped that Harry would not have the ordeal he had, but he knew that it would be just as bad in not worse. The whole point of this was to have the warrior push themselves to their limits and then past them. He returned to the book he had brought with him, fully confident that Harry would come through well.

Harry ran with all he had, the terrain was constantly changing, the incline would change and it would slope up and down. There were logs, roots, rocks, and branches around the trail, Harry would duck, jump, and otherwise elude them. Occasionally, it would be uphill, or he would need to leap around a few rocks or logs and then do a flip over another obstacle. His heart was pounding inside his chest harder than ever, except for the night in front of the Burrow fireplace with Hermione.

Harry struggled for breath as he moved forward eluding debris and not slowing his pace. Then he reached a point where there was no debris and the terrain smoothed out. Harry remembered Sean telling him that he would know when he could stop running and expect the next part of the trial. Harry stopped running and began to walk off the burn that was in his legs; he was looking around the deep dark wood. Then he realized that the wood had not been dark before, the area around him was changing, and when he saw gravestones appearing around him he knew what was about to happen.

He stopped in his tracks, remembering that Sean told him he had to stand and relive the experience without fear. He was suddenly thrown to the ground, and he found that he couldn’t move or speak on his own. He could not do anything to alter what he was seeing and experiencing, he had no choice but to relive it. He found that although he could not act or speak on his own, what he was thinking and feeling was entirely under his control.

The events of that night unfolded before him, and his senses experienced them as though he were back in the graveyard. He saw Cedric Diggery appear next to him and then it all started over again, right in front of him.

He saw Wormtail kill Cedric, he felt the cords bind him to the gravestone, he felt Wormtail gag him, and he saw the Death Eaters assemble around him. He felt Wormtail’s knife cut his arm, and then it all culminated when his worst fear was realized and he saw the renewed form of Lord Voldemort face him. The first time this happened, Harry had been terrified and not known what to do. But this time was different; this time Harry faced Voldemort with a new confidence.

The duel progressed just as it had before, with the beams colliding and the people Voldemort had killed emerging. Harry’s mind was his own while he experienced those things. He remembered that he had been very much afraid when he was first in the graveyard, but this time around he was cursing the fact that he couldn’t control his actions. If he could have, he would have charged Voldemort and destroyed him with his bare hands. Even when Voldemort gave the chilling threat of wanting to see the light leave Harry’s eyes, Harry was not afraid.
The matter of Harry’s escape also unfolded, he felt the force of the portkey begin to take him up…and then the memory stopped. Sharp minded young man that he was, Harry figured that he had passed the next part of the challenge. He figured that he had just gone through reliving his most harrowing experience, and now he would soon face his worst fear.

He still had his knife out, looking for the plant with the purple flower that Sean talked about. He had no idea how long it had been since he and Sean had left the monastery, but he didn’t care so much about that…he had a task to complete.

He looked around and saw the plant, as he walked toward it the woods started to get dark again. He braced himself for whatever was to come, and then he saw a horrifying vision.

He first saw the Burrow in flames with the Weasleys fleeing from the scene, he saw Hogwarts obliterated to the ground with the bodies of Neville Longbottom, Luna Lovegood, Ron and Ginny Weasley, and last of all to his horror Hermione Granger hanging from trees. He saw the markers of his parent’s graves desecrated and destroyed, and then he saw the figure of Lord Voldemort seated on a throne with Snape and LeStrange next to him gloating about his success.

Harry stood and watched the whole scene unfold in front of him. Fear never entered him, he merely knew that what was facing him was the price of failure…and failure was what he feared the most. Voldemort obtaining the power he desired and then once again destroying those who opposed him was what Harry feared, and what he knew would happen if he failed. The vision ended, and Harry was not crying or dumbfounded, he merely moved on, passing the final part of the test, and having gained a new resolution to succeed, failure was not an option.

Sean was nearly finished with his book when he looked up to see Harry repelling down the cliff. Sean prepared to receive his young student by pulling the rope to bring the boat as far in shore as possible. Harry let go of the rope about two feet above the boat and dropped in, breathing heavily and with exhaustion evident.

"Here," Sean said handing Harry a canteen, “have some water.” Harry placed something in Sean’s hand as he took the canteen and took a long refreshing drink.

Sean looked at the object in his hand, the purple flower found in the center of the wood.

“Well done” Sean said with pride and satisfaction in his voice. “Now we will go back to the monastery for the final test.”

“There’s more?” Harry asked with surprise between hard breaths.

“Aye” Sean replied, “one more test that I can’t tell you anything about.”

They pulled the boat ashore back at the monastery and Sean called for some ropes from the monastery. He and Harry took a rope each and climbed back up to the monastery. Sean began walking towards the stables and Harry dutifully followed him.

When they got there Sean stopped, “take off your shirt” he said to Harry without changing from his usual monotone. Harry did so and saw Sean pick up a small brand that was the same shape as the crucifix medallion he wore around his nec

The brand was white hot and Sean pointed it directly at Harry. Harry didn’t move, he didn’t even budge or tense up, after going through the training and the woods…he no longer feared death or pain.

Sean pressed the brand onto the left side of Harry’s chest, and Harry’s pectoral instinctively tensed up. The top part of the brand, the part that was blood red on Sean’s crucifix and stuck out from the rest of it, actually penetrated into Harry’s flesh, but he still didn’t budge.

The burning increased as Sean pushed the brand deeper until the frame itself burned the top of Harry’s skin, but he held in the scream that would have escaped a normal person. After a few moments, Sean moved his arm back, Harry looked down at the mark that now decorated his left pectoral.
“You passed” Sean said to Harry. “You didn’t shy away from pain or the expectation of it, and you endured it incredibly well.”

As Sean finished this thought, he brought the left strap of his tank top down and showed Harry the identical brand of his own, “the mark of a true Knight of the Order of St. George. The first part penetrated your flesh, which symbolizes inner commitment to the cause of the Order. And the second part burns the top of your skin, which symbolizes outward commitment. Consider that your dubbing into the Order.”

The two of them stared at each other for a moment, both of them contemplating how far they had come.

“We will be leaving the monastery,” Sean began to Harry, “at first light tomorrow.”

Harry knew that they would be leaving after he had completed his training, but they still had a few days before the battle would commence.

“Why are we leaving so soon?” Harry asked.

“Because Snape and LeStrange are out looking for you.” Sean began with a strong tone but reverted back to his usual monotone.

“So what’s the plan?” Harry asked.

“You will apparate us back to the Burrow, it is likely they have checked there. From there we will track them down, allow them to capture you, then destroy them and infiltrate the feast. From there we will go to Voldemort and Raiganzi and meet our chosen destinies.”

Harry nodded in understanding. The weight of what Sean had said to him was sinking in. Harry realized that he would soon be facing his destiny; he would soon be facing Voldemort again. He was confident that this time would be different; he knew that he would be without any kind of protection, but he wouldn’t have it any other way.

Harry and Sean made their way back to the dormitory, after Harry had watered his plant and pruned it a little, and Sean had said good night to Regal, when he was at the monastery he only slept after he had seen Sean, Sean and Harry settled down to sleep. Both of them had a lot on their minds, for the next day would bring them both one step closer to what their entire lives had been bringing them to.
Chapter: 19

Chapter 19: Tracking The Death Eaters

Harry and Sean were up at first light the next morning. They packed Sean’s duffle bag with some blankets and some food that the monastery provided for them. They filled a pair of canteens with water and dressed in their black pants and tank tops. Sean got his weapons and strapped them all onto his body as he had when they left the Burrow. Harry got his wand and put it in the pocket of his own “monk robe” as he and Sean would be traveling in those.

Sean had two things to do at the monastery before they left. The first was to write his last note to Bill and the Order of the Phoenix. He sat down and wrote:

Bill and the Order of the Phoenix:

The boy’s training is complete, and he has surpassed all expectations. I will make this brief, as we will be leaving as soon as I am done with this and have armed the boy. We are going to track down Snape and LeStrange, we plan on lulling them into a false sense of security, then eliminating them and infiltrating the opening feast. It is our hope that we will catch the Dark Lord off guard and by surprise at the feast. This will be our last communication before the battle. Look after Regal, and we hope that we will have your trust as you do ours.

Your friend and comrade,

Sean

PS I have received special permission to bring in three of the best werewolf hunters in the Order to help you in the battle at the school. They will be arriving from Scotland in time for the battle, Harry has given me a time and place...wait for them, they will not disappoint. Tell Lupin to keep out of this since I cannot guarantee they won’t kill him inadvertently or on purpose.

Sean finished his note and tied it to Regal’s leg before giving him some food and with a shout of “Imigh!” sending him off.

“Come with me” Sean said to Harry who obeyed him dutifully.

Sean took Harry to the trophy case he had noticed the day he arrived at the monastery. Sean found an item in the case and presented it to Harry.

“Do you know anything about Greek mythology?” Sean asked.

“A little” Harry answered.

“Do you know who Theseus was?” Harry nodded in answer.

“Several centuries ago,” Sean began explaining to Harry, “a Knight of the Order completed a mission in Greece that was very appreciated by the Greek people and leaders. In gratitude, they gave him this...the sword of Theseus.”

Harry took the sword and removed it from it’s sheathe to look at it. The blade was at least 24 inches long, and the hilt was rounded and thick.

“It’s sharp” Harry said with surprise.

“It never gets dull,” Sean said “the sword is said to be magical, and the Sagart is allowing a true wizard to wield it for the coming battle...a gesture of confidence and goodwill.”

“I will take it with honor” Harry said with a strong voice as he put the sword back in it’s sheathe, which was of the belt type, and wrapped it around his waist under the robe. They were now fully armed and ready to go.
“Dumbledore put the same protection on this monastery as he did for Hogwarts, so we will have to go outside to apparate” Sean said to Harry, who nodded in understanding.

They went outside, Sean told Harry to apparate to the Burrow to begin with, and that they would track them from there.

The journey was instant, and when they arrived Sean immediately made his way to where the temporary stables had been. He was confused as to how a tree had gotten there, but quickly focused on the mission at hand and was relieved to find that the tracks of the horses were still visible to his trained eye. Sean also found two other sets of tracks...human tracks.

“They were here,” Sean said to Harry who was a short distance from him. “And they followed our trail,” he continued as he looked down the road.

“Could you apparate us to where we cast off?” Sean asked Harry.

“Sure” Harry said with a monotone that sounded like Sean’s but with an English accent instead of an Irish one.

Sean grabbed Harry’s arm again and in an instant the two of them were back where they had cast off. Sean looked for tracks, but found none.

“This is a difficulty,” Sean began loud enough so Harry could hear, “I don’t see their tracks here, and it is unlikely that they lost our trail...do you have any thoughts?”

Harry was only slightly taken aback by Sean’s requesting his input; his mind began to formulate possible explanations.

“They probably either followed our trail to Godric’s Hollow or figured that I would go there,” Harry paused after this and thought on it some more, “maybe they didn’t bother looking from there.”

“That’s a very real possibility” Sean said, “I need you to apparate us about two miles outside of Godric’s Hollow.”

“Yes master” Harry said with respect.

They arrived and Sean explained his plan to Harry. “I will need you to give me a description of the Death Eaters we are tracking. I will see if I can find them or get a reliable lead as to where they are. We will be using you as bait long enough for them to send the word to Voldemort, then you and I will act.”

“I understand” Harry said, he then undid his sheathe and put the sword of Theseus into Sean’s duffle.

“Stay here” Sean said, “I will go on ahead, and if you are not here when I get back, I will know that they have taken you and I’ll track you.”

Sean made his way into town and got a similar welcome to the last time he came in. He explored for about an hour and found nothing. He next asked around, repeating Harry’s description and telling them that the people he was looking for were dangerous murderers and needed to be apprehended. Eventually, he got a lead, a local shopkeeper informed him that the two of them had been through and were staying at a local inn. Sean came back to Harry and told him what he had discovered.

“You need to go in alone, they won’t kill you. Leave the bag here with me, change into your old clothes (Harry had packed them into the bag), and go inside the town. I will follow about ten minutes behind, start to fight only after they’ve sent the owl. That will be my signal to come and fight, if they apparate away somewhere I will be in the tavern and you need to come and get me as fast as you can and double back to where they take you. When we fight, you will take Snape and I will take the woman.”

Harry changed his clothes and then made his way back into Godric’s Hollow. He remembered the last time he had come in here, and his hair long flowing hair and slim muscular build reminded him of how much he had changed since then. His mind
was clear and focused, but he decided not to empty it so that Snape or anyone else could tell that he was there. Sean was making his way into town and Harry thought that now was the time to spring the trap. He made his way toward the inn Sean told him Snape and Bellatrix were staying in.

LeStrange had been sitting next to the window and had spotted Harry coming into Godric’s Hollow.

“Severus,” she said to the figure in the other part of their room, “you were right Severus, he is coming back.”

Snape moved beside Bella at the window to see Harry making his way into the town.

“I told you Bella,” Snape began, “the boy’s emotions and feelings are his downfall.” They noticed him making his way toward the inn, and Snape began giving Bella instructions.

“Bella, go and pay the innkeeper to avoid drawing attention, then we will grab Potter and apparate back some to send the message to Lord Voldemort.”

Bella smiled an evil smile with glee and then went to do as Severus had instructed.

As Harry approached the door he felt a pair of hands grab each of his arms and then he felt himself being whisked away. He next found himself in an area of woodland facing the most dangerous minions of his worst enemy.

“We meet again Potter” Snape said in his usual sinister voice.

Harry decided to play dumb and drew his wand, “what are you two doing here?”

“We are on orders from the Dark Lord to personally escort you to the opening feast this year” Bellatrix answered with venom in her voice.

As she spoke, she conjured up strong cords to bind Harry. He pretended to struggle against the binds and try to squirm free as Snape shouted “Silencio!” and made Harry unable to speak.

“We did it Severus” Bella said ecstatically, “We had best send the Dark Lord his message.”

“How right you are Bella” Snape responded coldly with a smirk on his face as he was sensing the desperation running through Harry’s mind.

Harry, knowing Snape’s abilities with illegumency, was desperately trying to maintain the façade of being desperate and afraid. He still did this as he saw Snape write the message and send it off with the owl Bella had been holding. After the owl was off, Harry knew that he only had to wait now. Snape and LeStrange had both gone to sleep; neither of them suspected Harry would be a threat now that he was restrained. After they had dozed off, Harry would show them how wrong they were.
Chapter: 20

Chapter 20: Woodland Fight

After Harry could see that his two supposed captors had fallen asleep, he brought his arms out with all his might. After climbing up fifty feet of rope with nothing but his arms, breaking these cords wasn’t a problem. The silencio charm Snape had put on him ensured that they wouldn’t hear him as he broke the ropes. Harry looked around and found his wand then apparated back to the tavern to find the bar keep knocked out cold and Sean enjoying a mug of some kind of drink, most likely milk, with his duffle in hand.

“What happened here?” Harry asked his mentor and friend.

“It was closing time and he tried to throw me out,” Sean said as he approached Harry and took his arm. “Is everything ready?” Sean asked Harry.

“Yes,” Harry replied, “both of them are asleep and they have already sent off the message.”

“Let’s go then,” Sean said with a serious tone of determination…and they were off.

The loud pop of them apparating woke up Snape and Bella who looked into the night to see two figures standing in front of them. One they recognized as Harry with his wand drawn ready to fight, they could see the other one was about two inches shorter and holding two swords with the blades resting flat on his shoulders and crossing behind him. The light of the twilight sky reflected off of Sean’s blades and showed his emotionless face.

“Ever vigilant,” the shorter figure said to the two Death Eaters before them, “one rule the Dark Lord obviously didn’t teach yo...

Fear came to Snape’s face as he realized that he was trapped, he could not probe either of their minds, and he knew the Dark Lord would never forgive he and Bella if they lost Potter now.

“Gosh Snape,” Potter said in a cool monotone voice, “quit thinking so much or you’ll give me a headache.”

Harry paused to let his statement register before adding, “You’re right about Voldemort not forgiving you for losing me at this point, especially since my companion is a Muggle.”

“Let me kill the Muggle Severus” Bella said in her evil and malicious voice, “and you put the boy back to bed.”

Sean could only nod. Bella waved Sean over to a space about half a mile to the side of Snape and Harry. They went there to duel while Harry never averted his gaze from Snape.

“It would seem that someone has taught you illegumency,” Snape said to Harry trying to remain cool and confident.

“A lot more than that,” Harry stated coolly to Snape, “read my mind now and see if you like what you hear.”

Harry let his mental guard down long enough for Snape to hear him think “I’m going to kill you now for what you did to Dumbledore, bastard.”

Snape was scared out of his wits at this point, he knew that Harry wasn’t bluffing, that he was more than able, and that he wasn’t about to hold back. Harry and Snape performed the usual ritual before a wizard’s duel, then prepared to battle.

As Snape and Harry prepared to duel, Sean and Bellatrix had stopped and prepared to duel.

“Now listen you Muggle pig,” she spoke with pride and disgust as Sean sheathed his swords, “I don’t know how you primitive brutes fight, but we don’t start until we cross our right arm and bow.”
Sean went through the motion as Bella did the same. “Avara Kedavra!”

These would be the last words Bellatrix LeStrange ever said clearly. As she yelled the incantation, Sean spun to his right to avoid the green blast, taking out the knife on his right side as he did so, and then sprinted forward.

Before Lestrange could even utter the curse again, Sean had grabbed her wand with his left hand, brought the large knife in his right up and through the wand, then moved his body behind her and brought his right hand across her throat…performing a flawless wand slit.

“Im-pos-sible” Bella muttered as she instinctively clutched her throat and dropped to her knees.

As she dropped, Sean had sheathed his knife and unsheathed his swords; and in one fluid motion had brought the swords crossed into an x-shape to the sides of Bella’s neck before she could even clutch her throat.

“Not bad for a primitive brute Muggle pig, eh?” Sean said confidently, he then brought his arms out to his sides, decapitating Bella. In a few seconds, a Muggle had defeated one of the most dangerous of Voldemort’s Death Eaters.

At the scene of the other duel, Harry had performed the spin Sean taught him to elude spells, and then to Snape’s horror and utter disbelief, performed stupefy without uttering or thinking it. Snape flew back a few feet, landing on his back and wondering what had just happened, and then saw Harry running towards him.

Snape raised himself up on his arms and tried desperately to read anything from Harry’s mind but found that it was useless, all he could hear or see was water. Harry ran so fast that Snape couldn’t utter anything as Harry brought his foot up under Snape’s chin and kicked him with so much force that he flipped onto his back.

Harry then stomped onto Snape’s chest with his right foot and kicked Snape hard in the ribs with his left. Snape let out a yelp of pain as he spit up blood.

Harry backed away from Snape, “Get up!” Harry ordered Snape in an uncharacteristically brutish voice.

Snape raised himself to his hands and knees. Harry brought his right knee right to Snape’s face, breaking Snape’s nose and sending him upright. Then without hesitation he brought his right leg onto the ground and kicked Snape squarely in the chest with a left turnaround sidekick, sending Snape onto his back.

“You’re pathetic,” Harry said disgustedly to Snape, “where’s the intimidating potions master, where’s the traitorous Death Eater who ratted out my parents, where’s the one who murdered Dumbledore? Answer me!”

Harry looked at the sight of the professor who had intimidated so many of his peers, murdered his first mentor and father figure, and leaked the information that led to his parent’s murder. Now all he saw was a beaten wretch of a man spitting up blood and struggling to even get to his feet.

Harry raised his wand, “now,” he said to Snape with the monotone that he had gained from living and training with Sean, “you pay for your crimes.”

Snape’s eyes widened as he read Harry’s mind and heard two of the last words he would hear on this world, “bleed pig!”

Then Harry said it, “sectumsempra.”

The last thing Snape thought was simply “impossible, he’s too young and it couldn’t have been two and a half months ago I toyed with him…” then the spell took effect.

Snape had bled to death in about fifteen seconds, and Harry had watched him with the same emotionless expression he had on when Sean branded him. In a moment Sean came by with the head and cloak of Bellatrix LeStrange in tow.
“You won” he said to Harry simply and without any emotion.

“As did you.” Harry answered with a similar tone. “What do we do now?” Harry asked.

Sean threw Bella’s cloak over the arm that carried her head, then with his free hand unsheathed one of his swords and gave it to Harry.

“Patch up his face and take his head and cloak…leave the bodies for the buzzards.”

Harry obeyed. He used a few mendo charms to bring Snape’s face back to normal, only without any life in it. He removed Snape’s cloak before decapitating the corpse with Sean’s sword.

“We need to get back to the monastery now” Sean said, “we have a few days to prepare for the battle, and we need a bag and salt for the heads.”

Harry nodded, understanding that the salt would act as a preservative. He would have been in awe that he had defeated Snape, but he had learned not to think anything of victory until the whole conflict was done. Harry gave Sean back his sword which Sean immediately sheathed, then put his wand in his pocket and held Snape’s head in his hand by the hair. Sean made sure that Snape’s wand was destroyed, after this he grabbed his duffle and Harry’s arm. In another instant, they were back in front of the monastery.
Chapter 21: Final Preparations of the Phoenix

It was three days before the opening feast, and the Order of the Phoenix was assembled in their base at 12 Grimmauld Place. Hermione and Ginny weren’t official Order members, but were welcomed to the meeting due to all their efforts and the fact that the Order would need someone inside the school during the battle.

McGonagall was the leader of the Order and called for the beginning of the meeting. There was an air of uncertainty and anticipation as the meeting began. All the Order was present for this one, in addition to the members who had been frequenting the base; there was Mad-eye Moody, and Horace Slughorn (who had joined in the wake of the tragedy at the end of the sixth year) among others.

“I thank all of you for coming,” McGonagall began, “I don’t need to remind you of the absolute necessity that these proceedings be kept secret. The Dark Lord has many spies, and this plan relies largely on confidentiality. I have been in contact with the parents of the Hogwarts students and am delighted to say that I have been able to convince them that their children will be safe.”

The members of the Order were allowing McGonagall to speak, knowing that there would be time for questions later.

McGonagall continued, “I would now like to turn the time over to Bill Weasley for an update on Harry Potter.”

Bill walked up to the front of the gathered Order members and cleared his throat before he began to speak.

“I have been corresponding with the man looking after and training Harry. I received another message from him the day before yesterday.”

Bill read what would be Sean’s last letter before the end of the conflict. Bill was especially careful to specifically mention that three Knights who specialized in werewolves would be coming to aid the Order of the Phoenix. Remus was not happy about being left out of the fight, but Tonks helped convince him that it was for the best and that the rest of them would be fine. Bill ended with a tone that welcomed questions as he returned to his place in the gathered members.

Hermione was the one who broke the silence, “how will we know if Harry succeeded.”

McGonagall had a look of concern on her face as she answered.

“We will just have to have faith in Harry and his guardian…”

“His name is Sean!” Ginny blurted out from where she was sitting. This immediately attracted several sets of eyes, which rested on the usually quiet young girl (she was quiet during the meetings). Her face turned a bright crimson to match her hair, and then McGonagall continued, trying to divert attention from Ginny as well as continue the meeting.

“How right you are,” she stated, “we must have faith that Harry and Sean will succeed in infiltrating the feast. Once Harry arrives, You-Know-Who will be drawn to him and move to destroy him. Now, we must have a plan of attack and evacuation for the students.”

The next hour was spent formulating plans of how to evacuate the students and how the Order members would divide up to fight the different creatures.

Hermione and Ginny wanted to stay and fight, but McGonagall convinced them that since they would be among the students they would be ideal to perform the evacuation.

They agreed, realizing that it was best for them to evacuate the students…there really wasn’t anyone else. After another
thirty minutes of everyone going over their assignments and McGonagall assuring herself that they all understood, the meeting was adjourned.

Hermione went up to her parent’s room to be with them and tell them however much they wanted to know.

“Oh darling,” Mrs. Granger said to her daughter, “if it were up to me I wouldn’t have you going back to that school.”

“But mum,” Hermione interjected, “Hogwarts is my life, my future is there, and I’ve already invested so much into it…six years of my life, and Harry is there.”

As she finished, she fingered the bracelet Harry had given her, Hermione had told her parents of her feelings for Harry and that he had returned them. Her mother was ecstatic, and her father expressed a desire to have him over for Christmas so that he could chat with him.

Mr. Granger began to speak; “You know that I want nothing but the best for you. It is a shame that you are in a situation where that can only come with tremendous risk. I wish that you could have had a normal life for a witch, and if doing this can give you that for just one year…then I say go through with it.”

Hermione hugged and kissed her parents good night and thanked them for supporting her in everything. She then went up to say good night to Hedwig, clean her cage, and go to bed.

Ginny and Hermione had come to an agreement, Hermione would take care of Hedwig and Ginny would care for Regal. Regal’s perch had been moved into Ginny’s room to allow her to be ready if Regal required any special needs. It turned out that Regal was very self-reliant. He would hunt for his food and would relieve himself outside the house. The only real reason for moving his perch into Ginny’s room was to let her have a little bit of Sean in her room.

Ginny had also been meeting with her parents, who had assured her that they would not be at Hogwarts to help Bill and the others fight off Voldemort’s forces, they needed to stay with Lupin. They were more concerned about Ginny and her safety, but Ginny assured them that she and Hermione were clear about the escape route and that they would be just fine.

“Oh we hope so,” Mrs. Weasley said, “you have so much to live for. And we hope that you get to see Sean again, and in a peaceful time.’”

Mr. Weasley spoke at this point. “Just remember what McGonagall said and stick to the plan. You can be very headstrong and independent, but this is one time when you absolutely must conform and obey.”

Ginny nodded to show her understanding and then hugged and kissed her parents good night. When she got back to her room, she saw Regal peacefully settled on his perch. She went over and began to stroke his head and feathers. Regal had warmed up to Ginny over the past few weeks and would now nip at her affectionately when she stoked him.

“I hope I can give you back to him in person” Ginny said to Regal. After that she settled into her bed and went to sleep.
Chapter 22: Final Preparations of the Knights

It was the day of the opening feast as the two young warriors awoke with the sun. There was a long dark-green round bag in one corner of the room with the top tied off; it smelled of salt and was very rounded out.

They had been training as usual since they had returned from their excursion to find Snape and LeStrange. Most of their time was spent beating the dummy, perfecting their fighting moves, meditating, and sparring. Sean had also been in correspondence with the Scottish werewolf hunters and they knew their part in the attack. Harry had discovered that when he let his energy flow through him, the blade of the sword of Theseus would turn white hot and became indestructible.

That morning, both Harry and Sean knew it was the day that would change everything. They trained and took their meals; they ended early so that they could make their final plans and preparations; and there was something Sean needed to ask Harry.

Harry had been upset the other day because, despite all his best efforts, his plant had died. Sean explained to Harry that that was a part of having the plant. That Harry needed to realize that sometimes, after doing all that one could, bad things still happen and that we need to accept it and move on. They were about to leave to sharpen the blades, but Sean stopped.

“One moment,” he said, “there’s something I need to do.” Harry paused and turned to look at Sean, and then he saw him reach toward the wall, toward the sheathed katana blade that Harry had noticed when he first arrived.

Sean took the sheathe off the wall and held it in his left hand. He then drew the sword and stared at it for a little while. Harry recognized it as the same sword from when he had glimpsed into Sean’s mind, it was the sword he had used to kill his mother. Harry wasn’t sure what to say or do at this point, but Sean spoke.

“I vowed that I would never use this sword again but for one purpose. To kill Raiganzi Adrian Bognar.”

Harry and Sean then made their way to the smith wheel in the monastery, sharpening Sean’s swords, including his katana, and knives until they could slice a piece of paper.

“How close can you apparate to Hogwarts?” Sean asked Harry as he ran a piece of parchment through his katana.

“I can get to about two miles from the school” Harry answered as he continued to sharpen the straight sword.

“We should go at about eight-thirty then, we will have time to reach the castle and then put the final plan in action.” Sean paused and looked at Harry, “you understand the plan?”

Harry nodded with a grim resolution and ran a piece of scroll through the sword he had been sharpening.

Meanwhile back at 12 Grimmauld Place, Hermione and Ginny had woken up and made final preparations to set off for King’s Cross Station and platform 9 ¾. Lupin held onto Crookshanks while Hermione said her goodbyes. When Ginny came down the stairs, everyone was surprised to see Regal perched on her arm.

“He wouldn’t let me leave him,” Ginny said simply, stifling a giggle.

Everyone gave a little smile at this, “looks like you have a new pet” Lupin remarked.

Hermione and Ginny’s parents were very emotional as they said goodbye to their children, especially the Grangers who were saying goodbye to their only child.

“We will be looking forward to having you and Harry over at Christmas sweetie,” Mrs. Granger said.
Mr. Granger hugged his daughter and kissed her cheek and pleaded with her, “Come home Hermione, please just come ho
Hermione went to platform 9 ¾ with Ginny and the Weasleys. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley bid an anxiety-laden and tearful goodbye to their only daughter as Ron joined them and boarded the train.
“You know we will be there in spirit,” Mrs. Weasley began, “nothing will happen to you or the other students.”
Mr. Weasley offered his own council, “Just stick to the plan and don’t try anything drastic, and we will all be together again.”
Hermione had been notified that she would be head girl, so she left Ginny in their compartment where Neville, Luna, Demelza Robins (the Gryffindor Chaser), and Ron had joined them and wondered at the animal with Ginny.
“Wow” Neville said immediately when he saw the majestic falcon perched on the armrest next to where Ginny was sitting. “Where did you get that?”
Ginny looked up and realized that they were obviously talking about Regal. “This belongs to a friend of my eldest brother,” Ginny began with a wistful tone to her voice. “The bird was staying with my family and I and wouldn’t let me leave him there. So, I guess the only thing for me to do is take him to Hogwarts.”
Luna and Demelza were also in awe of the majestic bird there, “what’s his name?” Luna asked.
“Regal” Ginny answered with a hint of pride in her voice. Just then, Regal jumped for the open window and swooped out.
“Oh my gosh!” Demelza exclaimed.
“I wouldn’t worry about it” Ginny said “he knows to follow the train...he probably figures that it will take him back to his maste
Ginny thought of Sean and hoped that whatever he was planning, he would be okay and that he and Harry and the Order of the Phoenix could finally end the scourge of the Dark Lord.
Back at the monastery, Sean brought Harry into a room in the front part of the monastery where the Priest awaited them. The Priest stood at one end of the room, which was decorated with stained-glass windows depicting St. George defeating the dragon and other events from the history of the Order.
“Kneel,” he instructed to Harry and Sean as they walked in.
Sean and Harry removed their robes, clad in their black pants and tank tops and black split-toe ninja tabi boots, they made their way in front of the Priest and were on their knees facing him. The Priest held a knife in his right hand and made his way first to Sean, whose hair had grown down to the base of his neck and was sporting a light colored array of facial hair.
“This” the Priest said as he grabbed a handful of Sean’s hair with his left hand, “represents time spent in devotion to the training of another and teaching him to devote himself to a higher ideal.”
The Priest began to raise the knife to cut Sean’s long hair as he concluded, “Your mission has been accomplished, now shed the unnecessary and devote yourself to the mission at hand.”
The Priest raised the knife dangerously close to Sean’s skin on the back and sides of his head, and then lifted the hair on top, returning Sean’s hair to how it had been when Harry first met him. The Priest then, with a skill that Harry had never seen before, brought the knife across Sean’s face and cleanly took off all the facial hair without leaving a scratch on his face
Sean never moved, and Harry anticipated that the same thing waited for him. Sure enough, the Priest approached him with the knife and began to speak.
“This,” he said as he grabbed Harry’s hair, it had reached his shoulder blades and Harry was sporting a gruff beard as well, “represents sacrifice and devotion to training and teaching.”

The Priest brought the knife up to Harry, who did not move or flinch.

“You have completed your training and become a great warrior, now shed the unnecessary and do what must be done.”

The Priest ran the knife around Harry’s head and face in the same fashion and left him with a haircut identical to that of Sea.

“Now rise from your knees and bow no more to anyone but God. You are Knights of St. George and have completed your training…now fulfill your oaths to God, truth, justice, and to protect the otherwise defenseless. The two of you are now ready to go. You do not know pain, you do not know fear, and go knowing that you have the blessing of the Lord God, and all that is good in this world.”

Harry and Sean performed the kneeling salute Sean always did for the Sagart, and then took their leave.

“Sean” the Priest said, “may I have a word?” Sean told Harry to wait for him outside while he talked to the Sagart.

“I just wanted to say that I have seen you at your best and worst, but I have never in my life felt pride as a father.”

The Priest paused as Sean looked at him with a look that suggested that he was expecting something but wasn’t sure what. The Priest put his hands on Sean’s shoulders as he choked back tears and spoke.

“I feel that pride now, the pride a father must feel when he sees his son graduate or get married. You are my son, in every way except biologically, and I am so proud of you.”

The two of them embraced there in that room for what seemed like an eternity before they came apart.

“Now go my son,” the Priest said to Sean, “make this world safe for the good that live in it.”

Sean performed his usual bow and salute then went out to get Harry.

They went to their room for the last time and discarded their robes for the Death Eater robes.

“It disgusts me to wear this,” Harry said with regards to Snape’s robe.

“At least you get to wear a man’s robe,” Sean retorted in his usual monotone, “since I’m shorter than you I have to wear the woman’s robe.”

They both smirked at this and made their final preparations. As they did, Sean noticed something in an inside pocket of Bella’s robe.

“What’s that?” Harry asked as Sean unraveled the note and began to read it.

“I found it in the robe just now,” Sean answered, “it seems to be some kind of reminder for them.”

Sean read the note and summed it up for Harry as he did.

“Says for them to come into Hogwarts at about eight thirty and to bring you. It says that the werewolves will be outside ten minutes later standing guard, and that vampires and Inferi will be inside the school to ensure Voldemort’s domination of the interior.”

“How can they get in with all the protective spells?” Harry asked confused.
“It says that someone will be inside and lower the defenses” Sean paused and then posed a question to Harry.

“There’s a name here,” Sean began, “it’s a little faded, maybe you can make it out and tell me if it means anything.”

Harry read the note as Sean strapped his weapons on and hung his crucifix around his neck.

“Son of a bitch!” Harry said as he read the note.

“What is it?” Sean asked.

“I’ll explain later” Harry said with a hint of disbelief in his voice.

Harry took the sheath for the sword of Theseus and wrapped it around his waist. He then took his wand and placed it between the sheath and his waist. Sean had his usual weapons strapped to his body, but this time he also had his katana, which he had tied around his waist by the rope on the sheathe, with the sheath itself resting at about his hip with the curve part facing up and the hilt of the sword sticking up.

Harry paused for a moment to look around the room, and at the bed he had occupied for the past several weeks. A myriad of images raced through his mind, his first meeting Sean, their journey to Godric’s Hollow and cleaning the area around his parent’s graves, Sean telling him about the stars, his first set of push-ups, the first time he did a full split on his own, learning to fight without magic, the first time he held his own against Sean, defeating Snape.

“Harry” Sean said breaking him out of his revelry.

Harry immediately reacted to this because it was the first time Sean had ever called him by his name. When Sean saw that he had his attention, he continued.

“Before we leave,” they would be leaving in a few minutes, “I want to say that I am very proud of you and that whatever happens…you’ll always be a true Knight of the Order of St. George to me.”

“Thank you master” Harry responded.

Harry picked up the green bag and the two of them headed out. When they got a short distance from the monastery, Sean grabbed Harry’s arm and they were whisked away to a space next to the Hogwarts grounds.

“We’re here early enough to where we can walk and save our energy” Sean said to Harry who nodded in response. “God go with you Harry” Sean said to Harry.

“And with you” Harry responded to Sean who kissed his crucifix and then moved on.

“You’d better explain to me about the name on the note” Sean said to Harry.

“Right” he answered. Harry explained about the name as he and Sean made their way to Hogwarts…and their destinies.

Hermione and Ginny had insisted on getting a coach to themselves so that they could go over the evacuation plan to themselves. Hermione found Ginny after they got off the train.

“Where’s Regal?” Hermione asked when they met.

“He flew out of the train as we were coming here,” Ginny answered. “Hmm” she said after a moment having obviously thought of something.

Ginny stretched out her arm and said “Regal, tar!”
Sure enough, the majestic Lanner Falcon swooped down from the roof of a nearby shed and landed on Ginny’s arm.

With both their animals in tow, the two young witches found a carriage and began to talk about the plan.

“So after the battle starts,” Hermione reviewed to her friend as she stroked a purring Crookshanks nestled in her lap, “you move straight for the exit while I amplify my voice and tell them to follow you. Then, you take them to the stairways and instruct them to go to their common rooms...the first years can follow the older students.”

She took a breath before continuing, “You need to be sure that all of them make their ways to their common room. You have the list of passwords that McGonagall gave us?”

“Oh course” Ginny answered. The two friends faced each other as the school came into view.

“Well,” Ginny started as she stroked Regal, “this is it.”

“Yeah it is” Hermione added, “I just hope that Harry and Sean will find their way to the school.”

“I know they will,” Ginny began, “Sean could never fail.”

Hermione smiled as the carriages came to a stop outside the school and the students were unloaded and began to file into the Great Hall area. Hermione put Crookshanks with the other animals, and Ginny did the same with Regal. The students then made for their way to the Great Hall and began to be seated and wait for the feast to begin.

The sorting ceremony had gone by without any event, Hermione and Ginny were careful to notice where the prefects for the different houses were sitting so that they could pick them out when they evacuated. Hermione and Ginny were trying to stay calm and not let on that they knew anything. The seat for the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor was left vacant with the other seats filled at the head table. Hermione took in the familiar faces, smiling at Hagrid, and then noticed something that made her temporarily forget the looming battle and turn to Ginny.

“Isn’t that Minister Scrimgeour up there next to McGonagall?” Hermione asked Ginny.

“Yeah” Ginny said, “I wonder what he’s doing here” she added with curiosity in her voice but also with a hint of bitterness, still remembering the last time the Ministry tried to throw its weight around at the school. After a while, McGonagall stood up to speak.

“Welcome to the beginning of a new year here at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. We are all saddened at the loss of Dumbledore, but he would want us to continue and to not let fear or loss intimidate us into not continuing what the original founders envisioned for the school.”

McGonagall’s voice was noticeably choked up at the mention of Dumbledore, but she had gotten through her introduction quite well. The food appeared on the tables and plates, and the students began to enjoy themselves. Hermione and Ginny enjoyed conversing with Ron and the other Gryffindors. Ron was especially entertaining with his stories about working at Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes.

After a little while, McGonagall called for attention and spoke again, “And now, the esteemed Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour, our honored guest, would like to share a few words.”

There was a hush as Scrimgeour made his way to the center podium. He was dressed in a fine robe that reflected his status in the magical world. He wore a great ring on the third finger of his right hand that attracted many looks. He then cleared his throat, and began to speak.

“Thank you Headmistress McGonagall for the opportunity to be here. You young men and women are the future of our world, and I am glad to see that so many of you have bravely decided to return. For some of you, this is a thrilling beginning to your journey into the magical world. For others, it is a return and progression.”
The students were engrossed in the minister’s remarks, so much so that what he said next caught them completely by surprise.

“I am not one to say many words, so I would like to turn the time over to a friend of mine.”

He then pointed to the great doors where a tall man in a robe made his way down the hall. None of the students recognized him because he moved quickly, but the faculty had enough time to recognize the regenerated face of Lord Voldemort.

He replaced Scrimgeour at the pulpit and gave the students time to recognize him, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, the Dark Lord whose face and name they had all learned to fear. He began to speak.

“Good evening children” he cackled to the horrified audience before him. “I have come here to announce the beginning of the glorious reign of Lord Voldemort, the heir of Slytherin has returned. Now let me introduce you to some of my friends.”

Voldemort waved his hand and several Death Eaters, Inferi, and vampires made their way into the Great Hall. Screams of terror were mingled with gasps from the other students, even the Slytherins, as they looked around to see the worst-case scenario enfolding around them.

“Don’t think about escaping either” Voldemort stated, “I have werewolves and Dementors patrolling the entrance. No one will be getting in or out without my saying so.”

Voldemort paused before continuing, “It would seem that the only thing missing from this is Dumbledore’s favorite student…Harry Potter. But, soon another familiar face here will be arriving with him.”

There was a quiet air in the Great Hall as Voldemort paused for theatrical effect, Death Eaters had surrounded the staff table and disarmed the teachers as Luscious and Draco Malfoy covered McGonagall.

“When Severus arrives with Potter, all of you will bear witness to his death and my ascension to power. Before that, I believe I will help myself to some of this spread.” Voldemort began to eat and he and Scrimgeour began to talk.

“How could you do this?” McGonagall blurted out to Scrimgeour.

“I have been in leagues with Voldemort since before I ever became an Auror…I have been alive for almost two thousand ye”

“You’re a vampire!” McGonagall exclaimed in alarm and horror.

“Guilty as charged,” Scrimgeour replied, “and after Voldemort takes over, my children and I will never have a shortage of bodies to feed on.”

Hermione, Ginny, Neville, Ron, and Demelza were sitting together at the Gryffindor table and even though Hermione and Ginny were expecting something from Voldemort, they could not have expected this.

“Luna said that the Quibbler reported Scrimgeour being a vampire,” Hermione said in surprise, “but I didn’t believe it.”

They were all petrified, Hermione and Ginny were playing out in their minds what would happen if Sean and Harry had failed and Harry would be sacrificed.

Shortly before Voldemort had begun speaking, Sean and Harry were approaching the school.

“Let’s do it” Harry said to Sean.

“Godspeed Harry Potter, it has been an honor training you.”
Harry paused at this and faced his mentor, “It has been a privilege to learn from you Sean O’Sullivan...Erin go Braugh.”

Sean smiled and repeated “Erin go Braugh” as the two of them gripped each others forearms with their hands, the first time they had ever done anything like that, then ran forward.

The outdoor security had not yet arrived, so they ran ahead, only to be faced with the snake Nagini. The great snake began to hiss and coiled, sure to give the two Knights a fight worthy of legend. Sean ran ahead of Harry and threw one of his knives into the ground, through the snake’s head. Harry ran behind Sean and picked up Nagini with his free hand, taking the knife out and handing it to Sean as they entered the school, Harry then put the dead Nagini into the green bag he was carrying.

They stopped in the hall and slowed to a fast walk as Sean spoke, “you take the lead, I’ve never been here before.”

“Right,” Harry began as Sean took the bag from Harry so that he could move more freely, “it’s funny though,” Harry stated.

“What?” Sean asked.

“You said I was the first wizard to be trained at the monastery, and I think you’re the first Muggle to come into Hogwarts.” Sean smirked and the two of them continued. When they got to the doors of the Great Hall they found them closed, but they could hear what was going on.

They listened as Voldemort gave his speech, Harry wanted to burst in and end it all. Sean could sense Harry’s desire and put his arm in front of him.

“Wait for it” Sean commanded in his monotone.

“Wait for what?” Harry asked.

“Wait for the opportune moment, if we act at an opportune moment we can evacuate the students.” Harry nodded his agreement and the two of them waited.

Voldemort was contentedly eating sausages and enjoying the enormous power that he had at this moment. Then the doors opened and two figures wearing Death Eater robes with the hoods up walked through and proceeded to the front of the Hall. The taller one held a green bag in one hand and the shorter one had the robe they were wearing completely tied

“Allow me to introduce my two most loyal and effective minions, Severus Snape and Bellatrix LeStrange.” Voldemort beamed after he had stood up to announce their arrival.

The two figures made their way to the front before Voldemort, and then threw off their masks and cloaks. Two figures stood before Voldemort and the others at the faculty table with matching haircuts, one jet black and the other dark blonde. Voldemort was confused at this, and then he saw the scar on the head of the black haired one.

“Potter” he said with venom in his voice, “and a spare we will have to kill.”

The students tried to see who the figures were, but they were too far away for any of them to say for sure, and Voldemort’s voice wasn’t amplified so they couldn’t hear what was being said.

Scrimgeour remained confident, but tensed up a bit when he saw the crucifix around Sean’s neck, he recognized the symbol of a Knight of the Order of St. George and knew that this “spare” would be trouble.

“But he can’t be a Knight of the Order” Scrimgeour thought to himself with confusion, “he’s too young.”

“I am surprised that Severus and Bella left your spare alive and let the two of you come in here on your free will” Voldemort cackled to them in his menacing voice.
“Why don’t you congratulate them on their latest success?” Harry asked Voldemort. Then he opened the bag, reached in to grab two tufts of hair, and pulled two circular objects out of the bag as he let the bag drop to the ground and held up the heads.

There were several gasps from the faculty and the few students who could tell that the black haired figure held up two disembodied heads. After a few moments, Harry threw the heads to Voldemort.

“What…is…this?” Voldemort hissed between clenched breaths to the two figures before him.

“The beginning of the end Riddle” Harry said, “your end” Harry added pointing his finger at Voldemort.

As Harry said this, Sean returned to his side, drew the sword for his right hand, and opened the arrow case above his rear. Voldemort was infuriated at this point and shouted out orders to his followers.

“Beat Potter but leave him alive, and kill the spare!” Voldemort yelled to the Death Eaters, Inferi, and vampires that surrounded them.
Chapter 23: Preliminary Skirmish

Harry and Sean prepared for battle the instant Voldemort finished his order. As Sean tightened his grip on his sword he quickly asked Harry "do you remember what I said about how to kill a vampire?"

"Run it through the heart with a sharp object" Harry answered.

"Aye, and the best way to kill an Inferi?" Sean asked.

"Decapitation" Harry replied.

"Aye, now get behind me and get ready to use your magic."

With that, Harry and Sean stood back to back. Sean put his sword in his left hand and then grabbed as many arrows as he could fit into his right hand out of his case.

"Move with me" Sean instructed Harry.

Harry had out his wand and the sword of Theseus, which was now glowing white hot and ready to be used for the first time in millennia. Voldemort’s minions came at them, and what happened was disastrous for them. Voldemort had expected the sheer number of his forces to overwhelm any resistance, but now he was witnessing a Muggle and a 17 year-old wizard annihilating those forces.

Sean began firing arrows at an incredibly rapid pace and was moving so fast that Harry almost couldn’t keep up with him. Sean would fire one arrow and then load and fire another and another and another until he had fired all that were in his hand. He would then grab another handful and repeat the process, with every single arrow hitting it’s intended target.

Harry was glad that he had learned how to cast spells without uttering them, because there was no way that he would have been able to keep up with Sean otherwise. He emptied his mind and would cast a number of charms; he was able to instantly distinguish between a Death Eater and an Inferi. For the Death Eaters he used Stupefy, for the Inferi he used inflammare.

Harry and Sean kept this up until Sean announced that he had run out of arrows, but he was actually hording two in his case. At this, Sean closed up his crossbow, and drew his swords.

Harry kept his weapons out as he had them, and then Sean gave the instruction, "you take the left side and I’ll take the right side."

With that, they began fighting their foes, Sean fought them hand-to-hand and with his swords, and Harry used a combination of hand-to-hand, the sword of Theseus, and magic.

Harry had only seen Sean fight in their spars, now that he was seeing how he did when he wasn’t holding back…he saw that he was brilliant. Sean attacked with a combination of kicks, and attacks with his swords. He was incredibly fluid in his movements and precise in his attacks. He would destroy Inferi with a combination of foot sweeps sword thrusts and devastating kicks. Death Eaters couldn’t hit him with their spells, and after he would dodge one, he would avoid the spell, which was almost always the avada kedavra, and then sprint ahead to kill the Death Eater that tried to get him.

Harry was equally impressive and using kicks, the magic sword, and his wand magic to destroy the enemies that were befalling Sean and himself. He had mastered performing charms without having to say them, and the Death Eaters having to say their charms gave him all the advantage he needed. Harry would not use any of the unforgivable curses; he was determined to defeat Voldemort and his forces without sinking to their level.
Voldemort had sent all of his Death Eaters with the exception of the Malfoys into the fight, leaving no one but them to guard the faculty, himself, and Scrimgeour. None of the faculty though could take their eyes off of the display in front of them. They all knew Harry, and now they were seeing him fight like he was, they watched him and his companion take down foe after foe. Inside they were theorizing as to what his companion was, no one thought that it could be a Muggle, he was doing things no wizard had ever done before.

After the battle had waged for a few minutes, Hermione and Ginny saw their chance. Hermione nodded to Ginny who ran for the door as Hermione pointed her wand to her throat and amplified her voice.

“All students, head for the door immediately, move as fast as you can in an orderly manner” Hermione began, “your prefects will escort you to your common rooms.”

While she spoke, Voldemort took notice, but figuring that the students weren’t leaving anyway, told his forces to ignore them and kill the spare and restrain Potter. The students proceeded out of the room in an orderly but still somewhat hysterical fashion. The last ones out didn’t even bother to close the doors before making their way to the main hallway and following the other students to the great staircase.

After about twenty minutes of fighting, Sean thrust the sword in his right hand through the heart of a vampire and then with his other sword took the head of the last of Voldemort’s minions.

“That’s im-pos-sible” Voldemort muttered to himself in a tone that reflected his and Scrimgeour’s utter disbelief at what had happened.

There were bodies all around the two young warriors who stood emotionless over their kills. Many Inferi lay on the ground headless, many vampires lay on their backs or fronts with blood gushing out of their chests or where their heads used to be, and many Death Eaters lay dead from Harry’s spells or sword, as well as Sean’s arrows or swords.

Harry stared down Voldemort while Sean stared down Scrimgeour, all the while holding his bloodstained swords in his hand.

“Luscious,” Voldemort said in his usual sinister voice, “take our guests to the dungeon, I will deal with these pathetic fools myself.”

“Like hell you will!” Harry shouted angrily. “You will fight me and me only…it ends here and now!”

Scrimgeour walked to the side of Voldemort, “I will kill the spare, Lord Voldemort.”

The four enemies looked each other over and none of them wavered, a standoff ensued with Harry and Sean’s eyes meeting those of the men challenging them.

“This is between us,” Sean said to Voldemort and Scrimgeour. “Let them go” Sean said pointing to the faculty members with the sword in his left hand while he sheathed the one in his right.

“And why should we do that” Scrimgeour asked.

“There’s no one to guard them and you will be fighting us” Sean said simply.

Luscious Malfoy spoke at this point, “why you…gaahaugh” he was stopped by one of Sean’s arrows through his throat as he fired a second into Draco’s chest, killing them both instantly and using the last of his arrows.

The two Malfoys dropped to the ground dead as the horrified faculty looked on. Scrimgeour looked at Sean who had closed his crossbow and sheathed his sword.

“I see that we are at an impasse,” Scrimgeour stated.
“Not relatively” Sean said as he turned to McGonagall, “leave us!” he said to them.

McGonagall stood up slowly and then began leading the faculty out, Voldemort and Scrimgeour paid them no mind as they were staring at their enemies.

They continued their stare down until Sean broke the silence. “The Order of the Phoenix and a few Knights of the Order of St. George will be destroying your werewolves and Dementors momentarily, if not now.” A slight smirk came to his lips as he continued. “Hopefully Bill will use my wedding gift.”

“Face it Riddle” Harry began to Voldemort, “you’ve been backed into a corner.”

Voldemort realized that he was in a tight spot, he decided the only way to win was to destroy Harry.

“Very well then Potter” Voldemort spat out to Harry, “we will settle this once and for all. And after I have killed you, I’ll put your body on display in the Great Hall.”

“And after I kill you Riddle” Harry replied with ice in his tone, “I will burn your body and scatter the ashes so that there will be absolutely nothing left of you.”

The four duelists faced each other with aggressive looks and prepared for what would be two final showdowns between mortal enemies, Harry Potter and Tom Riddle, and Sean O’Sullivan and Rufus Scrimgeour.
A few minutes after Harry and Sean had entered Hogwarts, the werewolves and Dementors arrived to guard the outside of the school. It was a full moon that night, so the werewolves transformed. Voldemort’s way of thinking was that by putting the werewolves out with the Dementors there wasn’t any risk since the Dementors couldn’t die. The Order of the Phoenix was not content to sit this one out, the members that weren’t in the faculty at Hogwarts were to apparate to just outside the Hogwarts grounds, meet up with the Knights, then fight their way inside.

Bill and Kingsley would lead the group into battle and fight their way inside. Bill informed Lupin of Sean’s insistence that he sit this out since he could not guarantee his safety around the Knights. Lupin grudgingly agreed and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley agreed to take care of him for the night.

Bill looked over the assembled group. There was Moody and Tonks, two well-loved friends of his family and brave and valued Order members. Kingsley was there and his large form towered over the other Order members. Bill’s brothers Charlie, Fred, George, and even Percy were there and determined to see this to the end. Bill took a deep breath as the rest of the group arrived about the same time Harry and Sean made their presence known. They huddled in the cover of trees as Bill sent Charlie ahead to scout out the perimeter.

After he sent Charlie away, Bill saw three figures riding in on horseback. He figured they would be the Knights Sean had told him would come to his aid. The rider in front was the first to dismount and he made his way over to Bill. When he was close to him, he showed Bill his crucifix.

"My name is Tristan Bruce," he said with a thick Scottish accent, he then named the two men riding with him, "this is John McGregor, and David McAllen…we are Knights of St. George from Scotland and were sent here by Sean O’Sullivan to assist you in the coming battle. And may we say, that it is a great honor to fight alongside wizards once more."

"The feeling is mutual," Bill answered. Bill noticed that Tristan and the others looked closer to his age, all older than Sean. Tristan couldn’t have been younger than thirty-one, and the other two Knights looked around the same age. Bill came to realize just how much of a rarity Sean was, and he wondered why these three men were so ready and willing to take orders from him.

"I am very glad that you are here," Bill said to the three men before him. "We are going to charge them head on, and it would be best if you could take care of the werewolves while the other wizards and myself handle the Dementors. Especially since you won’t be able to see them."

"If we can’t see ‘em," John questioned, "how in the bloody hell are we supposed to fight ‘em?"

Bill paused for a moment to contemplate his answer, "we’ll just all have to trust each other."

Tristan and the other Knights had been given specific instructions to follow Bill’s orders, so they agreed and gathered their weapons. All three of them were armed with heavy shotguns, and all of them were loaded with silver bullets. They finished loading and checking their guns, then uttered some quick prayers in Latin and fell into formation.

A few moments later Charlie came back and gave a report to Bill. Bill turned to Kingsley and the others to give them the gist.

"He says there are about forty werewolves and two dozen Dementors out there."

This was more than Bill had expected, and he wondered if the original plan would work out. He paused and focused his
attention on Moody, who was the most experienced of the group.

“Allaster, what course of action would you suggest?”

“I think,” Moody began, “that it would be best for us to send the Muggles in first to engage and destroy the werewolves, and when the Dementors come we charge forward into a frontal assault, use speed and surprise to get them before they can counter.”

It was decided. Bill took a deep breath and muttered a simple prayer for the safety of his wife and loved ones. Bill then stepped forward and gave some final council.

“The three Knights will be going in first to engage the werewolves, then be ready with your patronuses and engage the Dementors. And remember that the wolves will go for your throats…so be prepared.”

Bill paused and was about to give the command, but thought it good to share a few words first.

“My friends, family, and comrades,” he began with as loud a voice as he could muster, “I don’t have to remind you of what is at stake here. We are here on what will soon become a field of battle to answer the threat of all those who would threaten our peace and those we hold dear. I don’t know if Harry and Sean will succeed in their mission. But I do know this, we will succeed in ours.”

There were a few chants of approval from the assembled Order members at this. Bill continued, feeling more confident as he

“We all have much at stake on a personal level. So I implore all of you now, fight with all your might, with every last breath in your bodies. Fight now to end the uprising of the Dark Lord, here and now, once and for all time!”

The three Knights and the Order members raised their arms in the air and yelled their approval.

Bill then knew it was time and gave the order, “Tristan, John, David, move out.”

The group waited for the Knights to get a head start, then moved out individually, they spread out so that they could confuse the enemies when the time came for battle, and concealed themselves behind the Knights.

The werewolves began to charge as the Knights made themselves known, but Tristan and the others quickly dropped to a knee and began to fire their shotguns at the beasts. They were all excellent marksmen and hit their marks with surgical preci

They could each load five rounds into their guns before needing to reload. Tristan would fire three shots before John started to fire, and John would fire three shots before David would start. The three used this system to incredible efficacy, at any point, one or two of them would be firing and the one or two who weren’t firing would be reloading or already reloaded. They dropped at least twenty wolves in this fashion, but there were just too many werewolves moving too fast for them to pick them all off from a distance.

“Hold fire!” Tristan ordered as John and David put their firearms away and drew their knives.

Each of them had a pair of knives like Sean’s; except for instead of a straight blade with “teeth,” they were curved like a small scimitar covering the length of their forearm with the tip of the blade at the elbow. They also had silver knuckle guards that the Knights could use to add power to their punches; the three of them drew one in each hand.

Tristan waited a few moments and then yelled, “charge!” and the three Knights ran at the wolves as fast as they could, having faith that the wizards would be warding off the magical creatures they had talked about.

At this time, the Order members emerged and instantly began warding off the Dementors, but a few of them looked at how the Knights were able to stop the werewolves and wondered how it was possible.
The Knights were now attacking them with only knives, but they were either dropping the werewolves or warding them off masterfully. Tristan, John, and David had all received some instruction from Sean on fighting in the past, so they would destroy the wolves with a brilliant combination of hand fighting and then finishing them off with the knives, by slashing, slitting, or thrusting.

All the Order of the Phoenix members who caught a glimpse of the Knights were beyond impressed. Bill could see why Sea insisted Lupin not be at the battle because the three Knights were almost barbaric in their fighting and killing the werewolves. At one point, Bill saw David plunge the blades of his knives into the throat of a werewolf and then pull his arms to the side, tearing out the wolf’s throat.

David then stood up, raised his arms in the air with the blood-stained knives and in a loud voice proclaimed “I kill werewolves!” and then stuck out his tongue and yelled before moving on to more wolves.

Other members of the Order of the Phoenix noticed and were awed, but remembered to stay focused on the Dementors.

Bill shot off a few patronuses but kept an eye out for Greyback. He needed to find Greyback, for himself and the others. He knew that killing their leader would discourage the other wolves, and he had a bit of a vendetta against Greyback. He made his way through the werewolves, being careful not to get in the path of the Knights and their weapons, while Kingsley, Moody, Tonks, and some of the other Order members covered his path with patronuses. Bill looked and fought his way around a few werewolves, his strength and reflexes having become heightened and more primal since his last encounter with Greyback…and then he saw him.

Greyback was a rare breed of werewolf in that he was fully aware of his surroundings and conscious of his decisions when in werewolf form. He obviously recognized Bill because the two of them became engaged in a stare down. Greyback prepared to pounce and Bill readied his wand, forgetting about Sean’s gift in his pocket. Greyback pounced, but Bill avoided it and spun around to try to get him with a curse.

“Petrificus total…” Bill began before Greyback swung one of his paws around, knocking Bill’s wand from his grasp. Seeing Bill’s wand and only means of defense gone, Greyback then stalked his prey as Bill stood facing his would be killer.

“Please keep her safe,” Bill thought to himself as he dropped his arms in defeat, Greyback smiled inside and prepared to pounce at and destroy Bill. But Bill’s eyes widened as he felt something in his pocket and he remembered. “Sean’s gift” he thought to himself remembering the weapon he had in his pocket.

As Greyback pounced forward, Bill reached into his pocket and pulled out Sean’s wedding gift. He gripped it like Sean had shown him, then he took careful aim and squeezed. The noise that went off was like nothing any of the wizards, werewolves, or Dementors present had ever heard and it attracted all their attention. Greyback had yelped in pain as the bullet from Bill’s pistol struck him just above his left front leg. He fell to the ground and tried to move forward, but all he could do was limp. He stopped limping when his head came in front of the barrel of Bill’s pistol, and Bill squeezed it again.

Greyback fell to the ground dead as a doornail. Many of the Order of the Phoenix members turned in Bill’s direction, surprised to hear the gunshots coming from where he was standing. Bill thought quickly, he realized that the surviving werewolves would most likely leave soon due to their decreasing numbers at the hands of the Knights and the loss of their leader. He could see that the Dementors were still fighting strongly. Bill paused for a moment, closed his eyes, and thought back to not long ago when he was in the South of France with his beloved Fleur.

He then opened his eyes and shouted “Accio wand” and his wand came back to his hand. He then held it up and yelled “expecto petronum!”

A large aura emerged from Bill’s wand and took the form of a huge dragon. This was even more powerful than the petronus Harry had used years ago to turn away the group of Dementors around Sirius. The Dementors scattered as the petronus became bigger and showed no signs of diminishing. Shortly after the Dementors all dispersed, the surviving werewolves literally turned tail and left, with Tristan and the others quickly gathering their guns and picking off as many werewolves as possible as they ran away.
Casualties had been minimal for the Order and none of the Knights had been hurt, but one of the Dementors had briefly attacked John before Tonks got it away with a patronus. The Knights’ knives were soaked with blood as they got up to regroup. The stench of the dead werewolf bodies was everywhere as those left on the battlefield looked around at their surroundings. While damage was being assessed, Moody came up to Bill.

“What is that thing, and how did you muster that patronus?” he asked gesturing to the now uncocked pistol as his magic eye searched it up and down.

“A wedding present. And you’d be amazed how powerful a patronus you can conjure after you’ve been on your honeymoon.” Bill answered calmly as he, Kingsley, Moody, Tonks, and the others made their way to the castle.

Hermione was leading the students to the stairwell and giving instructions for the first year students to follow the other members of their house. She stayed to ensure that the first years were moving along fine, after they heard the shots outside they froze for a moment before Hermione urged them forward and trusted them to continue on from there. Ginny had been the first one out of the Great Hall and had run for the staircase, making sure that some of the students could see and follow her. The plan was for Hermione to direct the students out of the Great Hall and then for Ginny to make sure they all got up the stairs.

Prefects stood by the different entrances and called out the names of the different houses. After all the other students had gone up the stairs, Hermione arrived at the stairs to meet her friend.

“Are you okay?” Hermione asked Ginny.

“Yeah” she answered. “Who do you suppose those two people were who came in during the feast? They couldn’t have been Snape and Bella” Ginny said this last part in a fearful tone, imagining the worst.

“I don’t know” Hermione answered, “but I’m sure we both know who we hope they were.”

Ginny nodded in understanding, “I hope that it was Sean and Harry.” Ginny stated, “and that they succeed.”

Hermione agreed, still taken aback by the thought of her Harry and his Knight guardian not succeeding and Voldemort waiting for broad daylight to perform the act that would strike fear and establish dominance.

“In any condition,” Hermione stated, “we need to go and stay with the others in the Gryffindor Common Room until it’s over.”

They arrived there and saw the group huddled into a scared and confused mass, and then they heard another gunshot from outside. Neville was the first to come forward and ask what everyone else was wondering.

“What the hell is going on?” Hermione realized that there was no point in keeping it a secret any longer.

She paused for a moment while she considered what and how much to tell them, and settled for starting with the wedding and talked about meeting Sean and learning about the Order of St. George, answering the question of why she was allowed at the meeting with, “they thought I could help the Order prepare for the battle.” As she said this last part she gestured outside where they could see the battle between the Order of the Phoenix and the werewolves and Dementors coming to a standstill.

“So Harry went with Sean and we haven’t seen them since then" Hermione said ending her account of all that had happened since the group of assembled students had last been together.

The Gryffindor students took all this in and were particularly astonished, they had known Harry.

“Harry’s been training with a Muggle?” Demelza asked.
“There really is an Order of St. George?” a fifth year student asked.

“What were those loud noises outside?” a second year asked.

“Why wasn’t I ever told about this?” Ron asked disgustedly.

“Look!” Hermione said with a loud huff, “the important thing right now is to stay here and stay alive…the rest will work itself out in time.” Hermione paused before ending with “and should the worst happen, we need to think of a way to get out of here.”

Hermione finished and went to sit down in an empty chair by the fireplace. As she sat down, she ran her finger over the bracelet on her left wrist; the one Harry had given her before he left. “Please be okay,” she prayed in her mind, “please come back to me.”
Chapter 25: The Final Battle

Harry and Sean were now left in the Great Hall with Voldemort and Scrimgeour; the silence in the room spoke volumes for the long-standing conflicts between the four of them. Harry wanted to clear some things up about Scrimgeour before he would leave Sean to do his job.

“You’ve been infiltrating the Ministry since you started there?” he began unraveling. “You’ve been protecting the Death Eaters, that’s why there have been so few arrests.”

Scrimgeour nodded to all of this and began to show his fangs. Harry continued on, “and I suspect you kept trying to get me to become your poster boy so that you could have arranged to have me easily sacrificed at this point.”

“Very clever I must say,” Scrimgeour began in answer, “truly Dumbledore’s man.”

“One question,” Harry said, “why did you arrest and hold Stan Shunpike?”

“My dear boy,” Scrimgeour said sinisterly, “I prefer to feed on living people.”

Rage entered Harry as he envisioned Stan Shunpike restrained in some dungeon and being drained of his blood little by little day after day in order to sustain the life of this demon.

“Enough of this” Voldemort barked out, “I will destroy Potter and afterwards keep both your heads as trophies.”

“Quit talking and let’s end this” Harry barked out to Voldemort.

With that Scrimgeour motioned for Sean to come with him in order to give Voldemort and Harry sufficient room to carry on their fight. Sean first went to the green bag on the floor and retrieved a small bag that looked like a beanbag with liquid inside it, and then followed Scrimgeour out.

After they had gone, Harry and Voldemort stood across from each other and stared at the bane of their existence. Harry had emptied his mind, denying Voldemort access, so Voldemort resolved to use other means to cause Harry to let his guard down.

“You have grown strong and learned much, Potter” he began, “but you cannot hope to defeat me. Better wizards then you have tried to beat me, Sirius Black, Albus Dumbledore, and your parents…they all died by my hand or by that of lesser wizards.”

“This is the end Riddle” Harry said using Voldemort’s birth surname. “Everyone that has been standing between us is dead or otherwise engaged tonight. All my protectors and your minions are gone, it is down to you and me.” Harry finished this with strength and emphasis in his voice.

Voldemort responded with a tone of confidence and malice, “And who do you think that favors more?”

Harry said nothing, nor made any move against the Dark Lord, Voldemort searched Harry’s mind and only found water. Harry took his wand and put it between his pants and his right leg.

“I believe we both know that this will not be settled with wands,” Harry said to Voldemort remembering the last time they duel.

“Indeed” Voldemort agreed as he conjured a sword into his right hand. “By the sword then?” Voldemort asked as the blade approached...
of his own sword began to glow white.

Harry drew the sword of Theseus from the sheathe at his left hip and responded to Voldemort with "by all means" as the blade began to glow white.

Scrimgeour got to the astronomy tower and turned to face Sean. "You fight well" Scrimgeour said, "but soon you will be dead

Sean said nothing and merely stood across from his enemy. Then he did something that took Scrimgeour completely by surprise. The Vampires spoke and wrote in a language that Scrimgeour himself had developed. It was a combination of ancient Hungarian and Latin. The Order of St. George had taught it to all of their vampire hunters since Sergei Romanovich shared it with the Order after becoming a Knight himself.

"It is you who will soon be dead Rufus Scrimgeour" Sean answered. "Or," he began again, "should I call you Raiganzi Adrian Bognar?"

Scrimgeour tensed at the use of his given name and the language he had developed for himself and his creations. He now looked with a keen interest at the young warrior before him and spoke in the vampire language.

"I recognize the language I developed for myself and my children," Scrimgeour began, "as well as the symbol of the Order of St. George around your neck," he said referring to Sean’s crucifix, "but you cannot be a Knight, you are too young.”

Sean responded to this in the vampire language with his usual monotone, “You made me,” he said with emphasis, “the night you killed my parents and left me alive. A Knight on your trail found where my mother hid me and brought me into the Order.”

Sean said the next part in a cold voice that reflected the righteous anger he had towards the head vampire who was now standing in front of him.

"Leaving me alive was your greatest mistake” he said in the same tone, but with more spite. “I will kill you here and now. If I die also, then so be it.”

Scrimgeour now decided to abandon all pre-tense and fight Sean as a vampire, and with magic.

"I will fight you as Raiganzi Adrian Bognar, there is no need for dual identities between us.”

Sean nodded before interjecting, “Enough talk,” in his thick Irish accent, “we end this, here and now.”

A sinister smile crept to Raiganzi’s lips as he began to speak, “I do remember your parents, they were that pathetic Irish couple that I satisfied a hunger with all those years ago when I was on the run. I remember the woman was so beautiful to me that I decided to make her mine. Then she was killed in Romania by…” he paused and his voice developed a sickly amused tone, "was that you?"

He could tell by the angered appearance of Sean’s face that he was indeed the one who had killed her.

“Tell me,” the vampire said to Sean, “was one of those swords you have strapped on the one you used to kill her?”

Sean reverted back to his emotionless face as he pointed to the katana with his right hand, unstrapping his weapons and dropping them to the ground as he did so.

“As a matter of fact, this is the sword I used that night.” Sean added the next part with resolution. “And after I beat you down with my bare hands, I will kill you with it.”

Sean crouched down and retrieved a pair of black gloves that were held to his katana sheath with some rope. The gloves were thick and heavy, with several steel balls embedded in them to inflict extra damage. Sean put on the gloves and got
into his fighting stance, facing Raiganzi with a determination to emerge victorious.

They stood facing each other for a few moments, each one willing the other to make the first move. They stared each other down, Raiganzi showing his vampire red eyes and baring his fangs as he held his wand in his right hand. Sean remained in his stance holding his fists upright, ready to spring into action at any second. Neither of them made the first move...they both moved forward at the same time.

Harry and Voldemort ran at each other with all the pent up rage and hatred they had, the one for the other. Voldemort's sword was magic like the one Harry was using, so the two of them were equally matched. Voldemort thrust his sword forward towards Harry's heart, Harry swung his sword under Voldemort's, hitting it up and then kicking Voldemort hard in the ribs. Harry followed this with a turnaround kick straight to Voldemort's sternum, causing him to stagger a few feet backward. Harry stopped and waited for Voldemort to make his move.

"Impressive," Voldemort said still maintaining an air of confidence. "But you do of course realize there is no way that you can beat me...I will destroy you, it is only a matter of time and you will die."

Harry paused but never lowered his guard "Then why are you hesitating?" he asked coldly.

Voldemort let out a menacing hiss and charged forward once again. Sean's training had pushed Harry's already impressive reflexes to a point that surpassed every kind of standard. Voldemort brought his sword in all directions as Harry blocked and parried. Voldemort was no stranger to sword fighting and was holding his own against the boy who lived.

Sparks of white light emitted as the blades of the two magical swords collided. Harry blocked another thrust, then brought a perfect left hook across Voldemort's face. As Voldemort staggered back, Harry ran in for the kill. He brought his sword toward Voldemort's throat; Voldemort was able to move out of the way, but not completely as Harry's sword slashed the left side of Voldemort's neck.

Voldemort brought his leg up to Harry's chest and kicked him back a couple of feet. A smirk covered Harry's face as he saw Voldemort cover the slash with his hand.

"First blood to you Potter," Voldemort said with disgust, then he fought dirty, "crucio!"

Harry was hit by the spell and fell to the ground in pain. He came to only to find Voldemort bearing down on him with his sword. By the time Harry was able to bring his foot up to Voldemort's face and get away, he had several slash marks on his shoulders, ribs, and forearms.

Harry got to his feet and saw Voldemort with his wand drawn and his sword in the other hand. Harry took out his wand and uttered a quick mendo charm for his left shoulder. He ignored the pain and did the same for his right shoulder. He then threw his wand up to the area where the faculty had been sitting.

"Why don't you keep your wand boy" Voldemort spat with venom in his voice.

"I don't need it to defeat you" Harry said back to him, the blood from his slashes still staining his arms as blood trickled from his wounded ribs.

Back at the astronomy tower, the vampire and the Knight were engaged in a heated battle. Raiganzi would move quickly, and was throwing out spells left and right in an attempt to kill or injure Sean. Sean was wiser than to attack blindly and wasted none of his energy in dodging the spells thrown at him. He would swing his fist or attempt to kick at the demon he had been hunting for the last sixteen years but had not yet done any real damage. Sean did not let his anger blind him though; he knew that sooner than later Raiganzi would slip up and he was determined to seize that opportun
Sean sprang forward with a speed he had not shown before, spinning away from the green beam that emitted from Raiganzi’s wand. This caught the vampire by surprise; Sean dodged the spell and then came at Raiganzi with all of his strength and rage. Sean reigned down on Raiganzi with a flurry of punches to his upper body and throat and followed through with devastating elbows to the head. He then hit him with several knees to his ribs and body until Raiganzi began to spit up blood.

Sean finished his barrage by grabbing the back of Raiganzi’s head with both his hands and bringing it down onto his raised knee. Raiganzi fell to the floor injured. He had suffered broken ribs from Sean’s assault and for the first time in his entire existence was bruised and broken. Sean stared at Raiganzi from a short distance away and held up his bloodstained gloved hands. Sean felt that he should say something, but he realized that words were not needed at this point.

He stopped as Raiganzi began to laugh a fiendish laugh.

“What’s so funny?” Sean asked as he looked at the beaten figure of the head vampire.

Scrimgeour responded with, “You really think that I would come up here alone?” Comprehension dawned on Sean as he heard a few figures come running at him. He turned around to see at least seven vampires running or floating through the air toward him. Sean knew that he would have to destroy them quickly, so he sprinted for his weapons. But before he could reach them, he was engaged in battle.

All of them attacked Sean at once, he fought them off as best he could, but the numbers of enemies and his lack of weapons were overwhelming him. He would kick one to the ground and then have to punch another to the ground. Then he would foot sweep another and heel kick another. By the time he was moving on to more of them, the others would be on their feet. He kept punching and kicking at his enemies, always being sure that he was moving closer and closer to his weapons. Eventually, he reached his weapons and brought up his two knives.

With his knives in hand, he made short work of Raiganzi’s pawns. He stabbed the first two straight through the heart with either of his hands. Then one lunged at him, and Sean ducked under the attempted blow, moved behind the vampire, brought his arm up in front of the vampire’s face arching him backwards, and then ran him through the heart from behind. The four remaining vampires decided to charge him all at once. Sean stabbed two right off with his knives, and then kicked one to the ground. He then used one of his knives to cut off the other’s hand and then brought the other knife through its heart. As he did that, he threw the knife used to cut off the hand through the heart of the one on the ground…they were beaten.

After a brief pause, one knife still in his left hand, Sean looked to try and find Raiganzi. He figured that his pawns had given him time to heal himself and that he would be using dirty tactics to win. Sean crept around carefully, then Raiganzi apparated in front of him and, with a newly conjured sword, slashed Sean around his legs and abdomen before bringing his sword through Sean’s left foot.

Sean vomited blood from the pain, and then brought his right foot up into Raiganzi’s face. Raiganzi fell back with his sword in hand and hit the ground with a loud thud, dropping his wand upon impact. Not wasting a moment, Sean ran forward and took up the wand. As Raiganzi lunged for Sean, he did a complete back flip, landing on his right foot and brought his knife through the wand, destroying it.

Raiganzi was infuriated, and the angrier he got, the cooler Sean would get, despite the major wounds and fatigue he had already sustained. Sean had learned to tune out pain; he was now angering Raiganzi even more by standing on both his feet despite the almost overwhelming pain he felt in his left.

Raiganzi hadn’t even knocked Sean down, and now Sean could sense that his time had come. He moved around on his feet some, and then Raiganzi charged at him with a loud scream and made to hit away Sean’s knife and then bite his neck.

Harry ignored the pulsing in his ribs long enough to parry Voldemort’s next strike, then brought his leg up into Voldemort’s groin and kicked him away long enough to accio his wand and perform mendo charms on his mid-section. Voldemort had already done the same for the slash on his neck, but now he was becoming tired of this fight.
“I grow tired of toying with you boy,” Voldemort said icily to Harry as Harry again threw his wand aside. “Prepare to die.”

“You first” Harry answered in the monotone voice he had acquired while training with Sean.

They had been fighting for nearly thirty minutes and were both very tired. Both had been wounded and had mended their wounds, both were determined to triumph. Their motives were what separated them the most. Voldemort wanted to win so that he could become the great ruler, the heir of Slytherin he was said to become. Harry wanted to keep his loved ones safe and honor his parent’s sacrifice by carrying on their family name. They both knew that this next time they ran at each other would be the last time, neither of them wanted this to continue any longer.

Harry and Voldemort both began to walk slowly around the room that had become their battleground. Neither one of them glanced away from the other; Voldemort seemed to be trying to glance inside Harry.

“Dumbledore has taught you well” Voldemort said in a low and menacing voice, “but not well enough.”

Harry knew that Voldemort was trying to play mind games with him, and he would not dignify him with a response. Voldemort continued to walk around as Harry did so, then he continued to Harry.

“You have obviously come far in learning occlumency and illigumency, but not even Dumbledore could have known how skilled I am. I see into your mind Potter, I see that you still remember when I killed the pathetic witch and wizard you call parents. I see that you want to save your pathetic friends, especially…”

Harry tensed as Voldemort paused, Harry knew that Voldemort knew. “The mudblood,” Voldemort said with confidence and venom in his voice. “I tried to get you to go after the foolish Weasley girl who opened the Chamber of Secrets so that you would drive away the know-it-all mudblood. But you two came together anyway…how romantic.”

Despite all his best efforts, Harry was losing control; it took every ounce of determination and self-mastery that he had gained through training with Sean to keep his mind focused on being empty.

“You realize,” Voldemort began again, “that even if by some miracle you survive this fight, I will continue to pursue and destroy you and those whom you profess to love. Who knows, perhaps she will even become a part of my forces, or my har…Riddle!” Harry yelled with fury as he charged at his enemy Harry had heard enough at this point and wanted to end it once and for all.

Voldemort calmly defended himself against Harry, blocking his blows and then attempting to strike. But then, Voldemort realized to his horror that Harry had not only learned to not attack blindly, but to let anger fuel his fighting. The two of them clashed in an epic struggle as white light emanated from their swords whenever they collided. Eventually, Harry brought his sword down onto Voldemort’s and the two held their swords together as they gazed into each other’s eyes.

All the hatred, malice, and anger the two of them felt for each other were in their eyes as they faced each other through the blades of their swords.

“You won’t get anywhere near Hermione” Harry said to Voldemort in a monotone voice garnished with righteous fury.

“And how is that?” Voldemort asked in response as the two of them pushed away from each other.

“Because you can’t kill people when you’re in hell” Harry spat back.

Harry grasped the sword of Theseus and ran at Voldemort as he ran at Harry with his sword poised to go through Harry’s heart or throat. In one instant, Harry realized the importance of being ever vigilant as he saw what Voldemort planned to do. His mind being emptied and in the right frame to adapt instantly to his opponent, Harry dropped to the ground in a full split just as Voldemort approached…and brought the legendary Greek sword into his enemy’s chest.
They both paused; Harry to look into the face of his archenemy, Voldemort to react to the mortal wound he had just received. Harry bounced off his thighs to his feet, but did not let the sword move. Voldemort had a look of shock on his face and his eyes wide open as Harry stared into his face. The night air made it’s way over Harry’s head and through his short crew cut as he looked and contemplated all that had happened and this new culmination, and then he spoke.

“For all my life,” Harry began to speak to the bane of his existence, “you’ve hunted me. You’ve murdered everyone who cared for and protected me…everyone who tried to give me a happy childhood. Now you see, that you sealed your own fate when you stole my innocence.”

Harry shifted the blade from Voldemort’s sternum through his heart, before Voldemort died, he heard Harry say, “I would look for the light to leave your eyes, but now I see that there isn’t any there.” Harry then withdrew his sword from Voldemort’s black heart, the Dark Lord gasped his last and fell over dead.

Harry sheathed his sword and then dropped to his knees in front of the sight that was before him.

“It’s over” he said out loud as he breathed a sigh that clearly conveyed him dropping a weight that had been on his back for far too long.

Before he became relaxed, he remembered what Sean had said to him some days earlier about what to do when this moment came.

“After you kill the Dark Lord…and you will kill him. Put the horcruxes on his body. Then take this,” he held up a bag that looked like a beanbag but full of liquid, “and throw it on his body. This is napalm, and it will burst into flames as soon as it comes in contact with the air. Put the ashes into some kind of container, then dispose of it in the water…the deeper the better.

Harry dug through the large green bag and found the bag Sean had described and checked to be sure that all the horcruxes were inside. He put the green bag containing the horcruxes, including the corpse of Nagini, on top of Voldemort’s dead body, and then dropped the bag onto Voldemort’s chest.

When it didn’t break, Harry took out his wand and yelled “inflamare,” breaking the bag and inflaming the body.

Harry watched the flames consume the man who had ruined his past, “but,” he thought with a smile, “I have my future.”

Harry would go and find the faculty after he had contained Voldemort’s ashes, for the time being, he satisfied himself with a sausage and a mug of pumpkin juice…they tasted better than anything he had ever had before.

Raiganzi ran forward and with a mighty move of his sword pushed Sean’s knife to the side and then lunged forward with his bared fangs. Sean was able to bring his left hand around and punch Raiganzi in the head with the knuckle guard of his knife. This sent Raiganzi back a distance and he became all the more infuriated with the young Knight who refused to die.

“Accept your fate you foolish boy” Raiganzi barked to Sean, “and die at the hands of your superior.”

Sean had moved to where his weapons were and carefully replaced his knife with his katana, he did it with such skill that Raiganzi didn’t notice. Sean had lost so much blood that he didn’t know how he was able to stand up.

“Come on” he baited the vampire as he held the hilt of his still sheathed katana with his right hand, “finish it.”

Raiganzi ran forward and brought his sword up to bring it down on Sean’s head. But in one fluid motion Sean unsheathed his katana and moved forward enough that the blade was behind his head, and Raiganzi’s sword rested on top of it.

Swordsman that he was, Raiganzi knew what this maneuver was and that there was no escaping, and he was shocked. Sean knew that it was over…he was in position to perform the unstoppable.
“This is not possible” Raiganzi said.

Sean knew that it would all end in a matter of seconds, and he summed up all the feelings he was experiencing inside in five words yelled out in the vampire language, “to Hell with you demon!”

Raiganzi did not even attempt to make a move. Sean raised his sword to bring Raiganzi’s blade into the air. Sean knew that the best way to kill a vampire was through the heart, but decapitation would also work. Sean then spun around to his left, decapitating Raiganzi. He turned around to face his enemy and watched as the body fell to the floor.

He sheathed his now blood-stained katana, picked up and stored his knives, and then limped over to where he had placed the napalm bag and took it over to where Raiganzi’s body lay. He found the head and put it on top of Raiganzi’s chest. His eyes found the ring on Raiganzi’s right hand ring finger, and he removed it “for the trophy case” he thought to himself.

Then he threw the bag onto the corpse, he had done this many times before, including to his mother’s body, and the corpse immediately burst into flames.

Sean waited until the flames had consumed the corpse, then with a few swift moves of his right foot, scattered the ashes around the tower. He now realized how much it hurt to stand, and that he was feeling very dizzy and faint with loss of blood. He remembered the way back to the Great Hall and figured he should check on Harry. He made his way down the stairs with his weapons in tow and across the hallway until he reached the Great Hall, leaving a trail of blood behind him.
Chapter: 26

Chapter 26: Reunions

Harry turned away from the fading flames at the sound of the opening doors. He saw his mentor and friend limp into the Great Hall, visibly bleeding from several wounds in different places. Alarm came over Harry’s face as he rushed to his mentor and put Sean’s left arm around his neck so that he wouldn’t have to put any weight onto his wounded foot.

“Are you okay?” Harry asked.

“I am wounded pretty badly” Sean said, “but put the ashes away first.”

“Yes master” Harry answered.

After a few moments, all that was left of the Dark Lord was a pile of ashes. Harry transfigured a dinner plate into an urn and then used the wingardium leviosa charm to levitate the ashes into the urn. He then sealed it and asked Sean to hold it for him so that he could get him out.

“We need to find the faculty, the doctor Madam Pomfrey will know what to do.”

Sean nodded and let Harry carry him out into the night air, leaving his weapons in the Great Hall.

Harry figured that the faculty would have gone out to help the members of the Order of the Phoenix fight off Voldemort’s remaining minions. As they made their way toward the main gate, Harry looked over to see that Sean had passed out.

“Oh God no” Harry yelled as he laid down Sean to check for a pulse, when he found one, he breathed a sigh of relief and began to carry Sean in his arms.

“Please don’t die,” Harry pleaded to the unconscious figure cradled in his arms, “I have the rest of my life to live now, and I would like for one mentor to be with me for it.”

Harry began to run as fast as he could (which wasn’t too fast after his ordeal with Voldemort) towards the gate and saw a large group of people standing around the gate area.

At first he tensed up and contemplated drawing his sword in preparing to fight. Then he saw the familiar form of Rubius Hagrid and relaxed as he ran forward. He didn’t want to stop and talk to anyone due to the urgency of the issue at hand.

“Madam Pomfrey!” Harry yelled desperately as he drew closer to the crowd.

“Oh God, Sean,” the familiar voice of Bill Weasley said as he ran to Harry and took Sean from him.

“Is he dead?” Bill asked Harry.

“He’s just unconscious” Harry answered, “but he needs to be treated right away.”

Bill found Madam Pomfrey and the two of them rushed away to the hospital wing.

The crowd looked in silence at Harry as he walked around to survey the situation. He saw many familiar faces, Hagrid stood out the most, he also saw Moody, Slughorn, Tonks, and McGonagall among others. None of them made a move to talk to Harry, they were talking about what they had seen earlier. They were thinking of his appearance, his short hair and toned muscular physique, how he was dressed, and that he had obviously defeated Lord Voldemort.
He stopped at McGonagall and asked her a question, “where is everybody?”

“Harry?” she said in a tone of disbelief as she looked at the stripling warrior who stood before her.

“Yes Headmistress,” he replied calmly, “It’s me.”

McGonagall and the others all stared wide-eyed and open mouthed at Harry. After a few moments, McGonagall answered him.

“Miss Granger and Miss Weasley were instructed to take the students into the different common rooms and to wait there until notified otherwise.”

Harry asked one more question of McGonagall, “What’s the password for the Gryffindor common room?”

McGonagall answered with a quiet voice that still contained disbelief, “Honeydukes.”

“Thank you” Harry answered politely, “by your leave…”

“Go on” McGonagall said to Harry, “you should take some rest,” Harry nodded and was off.

Harry walked at a moderately slow pace, he was tired from the duel with Voldemort and Sean had the urn, so he was empty handed. He walked down toward the stairwells. He needed to make sure that she was okay; he needed to see his Hermione, the anchor who had kept him down to Earth while Sean’s training had pushed him over the edge.

He came to the stairwell and waited patiently for it to come to the path to the Gryffindor common room. When it did, he stepped off and walked to the portrait of the fat lady.

“Is it over” she asked Harry as he stopped in front of the portrait.

“The worst of it is,” he answered remembering that he still had to dispose of the ashes of the horcruxes and Voldemort’s remains. “Honeydukes.”

Hermione Granger was still on edge. The whole night had not been conducive to peace and serenity. After the noise had died down outside, she had sent the others to bed and volunteered to stand guard in case anything else happened. Ginny had volunteered to come and take over for Hermione if she needed a rest. She sat in the same chair she had occupied earlier, but she couldn’t sleep, she stayed up and was sometimes pacing thinking about Harry and praying for his safety. She then heard the portrait hall open up.

She tensed as she heard a lone figure’s footsteps coming up the stairs, slowly, but methodically. As slow as the person was moving, about one step every two seconds, she didn’t think it could be Harry because she had imagined him running up the stairs to her. She was determined not to let whatever Death Eater was coming up see her crying or afraid. She brandished her wand and stood up to face the intruder.

“Stop! Don’t move!” she belted out to the figure as he opened the door and made his way toward her.

She could not see very well because of the low light. The figure took out a wand and lit a fire in the fireplace without saying any charms.

“Who are you?” Hermione asked as she was beginning to make out features on the figure moving towards her.

She could see that he was six feet tall, and that he had very short hair, as he came closer Hermione could see blood on his clothes. He said nothing as he continued to move forward slowly and patiently. Hermione couldn’t explain it, but she was beginning to feel less and less concerned about the figure moving toward her.
“Hermione,” the figure said quietly as he stepped into the light of the fireplace, revealing his face, body, and jet-black hair. “It’s me.”

“Harry?” Hermione asked as she looked the figure over.

She saw the toned muscular physique, the black tank top and pants, the sword at the figure’s left, the very short hair in a crew cut, the familiar glasses and lightning-shaped scar above his right eye. She caught her breath as she reached forward to feel the scar. They were now only inches apart and Hermione could hear his breathing, she gently removed his glasses to look into his emerald green eyes.

“It is you” Hermione said quietly, just above a whisper.

She became lost in his eyes and he in hers as they came closer and closer until their lips met in a slow, and passionate kiss. They didn’t wait long before deepening the kiss, and they both poured all their feelings into it. All the longing for and missing the other, all the anxiety, and now all the love that they had for each other were pouring out of them and into each other. Hermione moaned in pleasure and delight as Harry turned it into an open-mouth kiss. Hermione pushed Harry against the wall as they became even more engrossed in each other. Their breath became more heated as they kissed even more passionately.

After a few minutes they parted for air. They were both breathing harder and faster as they looked at each other lovingly and Harry brought his forehead down to rest on Hermione’s. Hermione had so much she wanted to ask and so much she wanted to know about what had been going on since they had parted company. But she knew that could wait, right now she was content to snog her true love senseless.

“Are you tired?” Harry asked the young witch in front of him.

“I can stay up a little longer,” she said not wanting to leave her Harry or end this beautiful moment.

Harry looked at Hermione, and then noticed the glare coming from her left wrist.

“You’re still wearing the bracelet I gave you” Harry said as he brought a few of his fingers to touch the charm on his love’s wr

“I never take it off,” she said to him, “except when I bathe because I couldn’t stand it if I lost or damaged it.”

Harry looked at her and then realized just how tired he was.

“Could you please get me a blanket, I think I will sleep out here on the couch tonight, I don’t want to wake Seamus, Dean, or Ron’ Harry politely asked.

“Of course” Hermione answered.

She decided to change while she was getting the blanket and pillow and changed from her robes to a modest nightgown. When she came back with a fairly thick quilt and fluffy pillow for Harry, she found that he had taken off the black tank top and boots he had been wearing, put his glasses back on, and was settling himself in on the couch. She knelt beside the couch where Harry had moved the back cushions away and was now lying on his back.

She paused as she got near to him, she could see just how toned and muscular he had become. His arms were strong now, not extremely buffed, but very well toned and solid. His chest was firm and strong, and he now sported a washboard stomach of six-pack abs.

“What happened to your hair?” Hermione asked Harry.

“The Knights always get it cut this way after they finish with training.”
“So you are a Knight now,” Hermione asked in a calm and almost seductive tone as she ran her fingers over his head through his now short hair, “like Sean?”

Harry answered her with confidence, “I completed the training for it, but I wasn’t required to make an oath to the Order of St. George.”

The next thing Hermione noticed was the crucifix brand on Harry’s chest.

“My God!” she exclaimed as she took her hand away from his hair and jumped back slightly, “what is that, did it hurt?!”

Harry gently took Hermione’s hand before answering, “This is the mark of passing the final test, and a mark that symbolizes inward and outward commitment to the cause of the Order of St. George, and it hurt like Hell…but I endured it” he said the last part with a bit of pride.

Hermione calmed herself and smiled at him, she wanted to ask him so much more, “What test are you…” Harry gently put a finger to Hermione’s lips to silence her.

“I’ve been through a lot,” he began, “I want to sleep.”

Hermione got a disappointed but understanding look on her face and got up to leave, but she felt a hand lightly grab her wrist. She looked back at Harry, who had risen to his feet, with a confused look.

“I said I want to sleep,” Harry said to Hermione, “not that I want you to leave.”

It only took Hermione a moment to figure out what he meant by this. She resisted the urge to squeal in delight as a big smile came to her face. She settled for jumping into Harry’s arms and wrapping her legs around his waist as he held her close, never wanting to let her go.

Hermione wouldn’t release her hold on Harry, so Harry put the pillow on the couch and brought the quilt up as he lay down onto the couch. Hermione began to settle on the couch and lay on her left side against the back of it. Harry lay down on his back and brought the quilt over the two of them. After he had laid down, Hermione put her left arm between Harry and the pillow, she then rested her right hand on the left side of his firm and strong chest. She then settled her head over his chest where she could hear his heart beat, their legs intertwining at the bottom of the couch. They both took deep, satisfied breaths before Harry spoke.

“I love you Hermione,” he said to her after they had settled into their chosen sleeping positions.

“And I love you Harry,” Hermione responded, “now and forever.”

They shared a brief kiss on the lips, Harry took off his glasses and tossed them onto a nearby footrest, and then the two of them dozed off happier than either of them had ever been.

Madam Pomfrey motioned for Bill to place Sean O’Sullivan’s body onto one of the beds in the hospital wing. Bill was quick to listen and obey, he was worried for his friend but trusted in Madam Pomfrey’s abilities. Madam Pomfrey quickly removed Sean’s shirt and pants to examine the wounds that were all over his body. As she did so, Bill watched with concern, he wanted his friend to survive so that the two of them could celebrate the great victory they had achieved. Harry had destroyed the Dark Lord, Sean had killed the head vampire, and Bill had killed the head werewolf. For all intents and purposes, the war was all but over, the only factor was Wormtail, and Bill didn’t believe he would be much of a threat.

After Madam Pomfrey had obviously finished her examination, Bill spoke to her in a tone that reflected calm concern.

“Will he live?” he asked to the doctor in front of him, who was now starting to clean her patient’s wounds.

“It’s too early to say” she responded grimly, “I can tend to most of these wounds easily enough.”
She paused as she gestured to his left foot, which was sporting a hole in the middle that went all the way through.

“But he’s lost a lot of blood, and I’m not sure if there’s anything we can do about the more serious ones.”

“Don’t you have any potions that can replenish the blood he’s lost?” Bill asked with a raised voice.

“I have potions,” Pomfrey answered, “but he has to be awake to take them and I don’t know if he is going to regain consciousness…he has to want to live.”

Bill remembered that Sean had said that he did not expect to survive his fight with the head vampire, he wondered if Sean wanted to continue living after he had accomplished what he had chosen as his destiny.

Bill walked over to where Sean lay on the bed. While Madam Pomfrey began to clean the wounds on Sean’s lower body, focusing especially on his left foot, Bill spoke to the unconscious form of his best friend.

“Hey Sean, so now that you’ve destroyed the head vampire and taught Harry what he needed to know to defeat the Dark Lord, I guess you think that there’s no more purpose for you here.”

Bill paused after this and wondered what more he could say to Sean to hopefully convince him to stay.

“But, I have the rest of my life ahead of me, and I want you to be there for it. Fleur and I want children, we want a family, and I want our children to know you, I want you to be their godfather. I know that the world needs you, there are too few people like you who are brave enough to do the right thing and skilled enough to make a difference.”

Bill paused before continuing, “and you know that my sister fancies you…stay for my sister, perhaps you could be my children’s uncle as well as godfather.”

Sean had lost consciousness, but inside his mind there was a battle going on. One part of him wanted to give up and surrender to the eternities, leaving this world. Another part of him struggled to hold onto his life, that part reasoned that the only way to completely defeat the head vampire was to survive and live a good and virtuous life. It was a toss-up as to which side would win.

Then, Sean heard Bill speak four words that made Sean want to fight for survival, “stay for my sister.” He was then filled with a new desire, the desire and will to survive and live for the future that his beloved parents would have wanted for him.

“Excuse me” Madam Pomfrey said to Bill, “but you should leave now, I have to dress the rest of his wounds and you should take some rest.”

Bill knew better than to argue with the doctor, having stayed a few nights in the hospital wing himself when he was a student at Hogwarts.

“When can I come back and see him?”

“I will stay up and do my best to see that he is in stable condition,” Madam Pomfrey responded, “come by in the morning and check with me then.”

Bill nodded and excused himself. He walked back to where the faculty, Knights, and Order members had gathered.

“How does it look?” McGonagall asked Bill with concern in her voice as Tristan, John, who was eating some chocolate, and David listened intently.

“It’s hard to say” Bill replied, “Madam Pomfrey says that he’s lost a lot of blood and that some of his more serious wounds could kill him.”
Bill stopped at this and had an obvious tone of worry in his voice.

“I suggest that you take some rest Mr. Weasley” McGonagall said to him. “You will be staying in the faculty dormitory, sharing a room with Professor Shacklebolt.”

“Professor?” Bill asked with confusion and wonder in his voice.

“Yes,” McGonagall answered, “Kinglsey has graciously agreed to fill the post of Professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts.”
Chapter 27: Voldemort's Destruction

Ron Weasley woke up in his room and looked around. His two roommates Dean and Seamus were still asleep when he awoke. His sleep had been uneasy at best; and as he looked at the empty bed that normally belonged to his best friend, he remembered what had gone on the night before. After the sorting was finished, Minister Scrimgeour revealed himself to be in leagues with He Who Must Not Be Named and then the two people in Death Eater robes entered and the fight started then the students were evacuated.

He remembered Hermione explaining the situation to them after they had gathered in the common room, and now he felt an anxiety about facing the new day. He wondered what awaited him outside of his bedroom, and what exactly had happened last night. He decided that the only way to know for sure was to go out and see. He changed from his pajamas to a pair of jeans and a t-shirt his mum had given him for his last birthday. He then grabbed his wand, took a deep breath and set out.

He had his wand firmly in his hand as he made his way into the common room. He was going to go straight out to the grounds, but then he saw two items that attracted his curiosity. He saw a pair of glasses on a leg rest, and a black tank top with a sword and sheathe beside it on the ground nearby. He cautiously approached the area near the fireplace, ready for anything…or so he thought. The scene that awaited him there was one that would confuse and almost frighten him. He let out a small scream of surprise at what he saw when he turned around to face the couch.

He immediately recognized Hermione, and he saw that she was wearing a nightgown and was snuggled up, with a big smile on her face, next to a young man who he didn't recognize at first. After he saw the scar on his forehead however, he figured it was Harry.

He heard Hermione breath a deep sigh and stiffened at the prospect of her waking up and seeing him there. He relaxed when she stayed asleep and snuggled next to Harry even deeper. Ron couldn’t help but think how wrong it was for him to see his two best friends like they were. But he knew that there would be time for explanations later. For now, he figured that Harry must have defeated Voldemort and that it was safe for him to back to sleep…but he found it difficult to sleep after what he had just seen.

About an hour later, Harry Potter opened his eyes and took in his surroundings. The first thing he noticed was breathing in the scent of the beautiful girl lying next to him, her head leaning against his chest and her arms around him. He felt his right arm around her neck and his left arm holding her right hand. He breathed a contented sigh and then gave her hand a squeeze. Hermione awoke slowly and blinked before smiling at the young man next to her.

“Hey” she said to Harry as she fully awakened.

“Did you sleep well?” he asked her.

“That was the best sleep I have ever had in my entire life” she answered him with enthusiastic sincerity.

“Good” Harry replied before kissing her on the mouth.

Hermione gasped in surprise at first, but soon kissed him back and they both sat up on the couch. They rose to their feet and Harry picked up his tank top and glasses, then he remembered what he had done before he had come up to the common room.

“Oh no, Sean!” Harry exclaimed with fear and anxiety.
“What is it Harry?” Hermione asked slightly worried.

“Sean was in bad shape after his fight with Scrimgeour and Bill took him to the hospital wing.”

Hermione understood what Harry’s concern was and responded immediately; “we’ll go to the hospital wing and check on him now.”

Harry looked at Hermione and said, “You don’t have to come with me.”

Hermione answered him, “All this time I have been worrying about you being murdered or coming back and me not knowing you anymore. I don’t want to leave you anytime soon.”

“Alright” Harry answered, “let’s go.”

Sean woke up that morning to find himself in a hospital bed, something he had never experienced before, and facing very unfamiliar sights. He felt a tingling in his foot and in the other parts where he had been wounded, but it was obvious to him that his foot was the most serious of his injuries. He looked to the side of his bed and found Harry’s urn on a table next to him.

“Sean!” he heard Bill’s voice call out as he walked into the hospital with a drink in his hand that he quickly discarded.

“Thank God you’re awake,” Bill said as he came up next to Sean’s bed.

“Madam Pomfrey’s office I presume” Sean said to Bill.

“You’re correct” Bill answered.

As he said that, three other figures walked into the room. Although he had not seen them for years, Sean immediately recognized who they were.

“Tristan, John, David!” Sean called out as the three Scottish Knights entered the room. “You did alright then?” Sean asked them.

“Aye” Tristan answered, “but those Dementors were an odd bunch.”

“Aye” John said as he took a bite of chocolate, “the wizards told me that one of them got a hold of me. All I know is that I felt like I’d never feel happiness again, thank God for the wizards there.”

David then spoke, “the werewolves weren’t much of a problem…nothing that some silver shotgun shells and your old fighting lessons couldn’t a handle.”

Sean was happy that all his friends had survived and that the battle had been an enormous success.

“How long was I out for?” Sean asked with concern and in a groggy voice.

Bill answered, “You nearly died last night, Harry brought you to Madam Pomfrey and she and I brought you here. As far as your injuries go they were all easily treated except for the one in your foot.”

Sean was now conscious enough to notice that his wounds were pretty minor, comparatively speaking, with the exception of his bandaged left foot.

Sean then got a questioning look on his face, “What happened last night?”

Bill recounted to Sean how the werewolves and Dementors had dispersed shortly after he shot and killed Greyback. He then talked about how he, the Knights, and the other Order of the Phoenix members made their way into the castle and started fighting off Voldemort’s forces. Then all of the sudden all the vampires either dropped dead or suddenly couldn’t fight anymore and left. He then said that the Inferi and remaining vampires weren’t a problem to destroy and that the
Death Eaters that had been at the castle were either dead or now in Azkaban Prison. About that far into Bill’s recap Harry and Hermione walked into the room.

“Thank God you’re all right,” Harry said as he came beside Bill.

“Hey Harry…Hermione” Sean answered referring to both of the new arrivals as he sat up on his bed.

Harry and Hermione had come straight over from the common room and hadn’t changed clothes, Hermione was grateful that her nightgown was modest.

“I’m glad to see that you came out better than I did.” Sean said speaking to Harry.

“Well,” Harry answered giving Hermione’s hand a squeeze, “I owe that to Hermione and her teaching.”

A slight smirk crossed Sean’s face, seeing his protégé with the love of his life made him happy.

About that time Sean noticed the strange looks being given and received by Hermione and the three Knights.

“Oh by the way” Sean said to break the silence. “This is Tristan, John, and David, the three Scottish Knights that came to help with the werewolves last night.”

Harry and Hermione exchanged handshakes and greetings with the three Knights before Tristan spoke.

“Well, we had better be getting back to the monastery for purification.”

“I hope to see you again sometime” Sean said to them.

“Aye” answered Tristan as he, John, and David came by Sean’s bed to give him farewell embraces and then leave.

“You should go dispose of this,” Sean said as he tossed Harry the urn. “Then I would appreciate it if you could apparate me back to the monastery, I need to do purification myself.”

“About that,” Harry said to Sean. “I talked with McGonagall and she said that the term will be starting a week later, with some kind of opening ceremony on Friday and then classes starting on Monday. Students can either stay here and wait, or go home for a few days.” Harry paused before saying the next part, “and I was wondering if I could do purification with yo

While Sean was surprised at this, he was delighted that Harry wanted to go through with the whole process of the Order of St. George.

“Of course” Sean answered, “but we need to be leaving in about an hour if you are going to be finished in time for the ceremony.”

Harry shook Sean’s hand and then told him to meet him by the white tomb when he was ready to go. Sean looked at Bill, who nodded to let Sean know that he knew what Harry was talking about, and then Sean nodded to Harry in understanding. Harry then made his way out of the hospital with the urn in one hand, and Hermione on his other arm.

They made their way to the river by the white tomb, Harry was wearing the same gear he had on the night before and Hermione (who had insisted on changing) was dressed in a pink t-shirt and jeans. It was a warm summer day outside and between the heat of the day and the heat coursing through their bodies as they walked together, completely in love, they were very comfortable.

They reached the white tomb, and the two of them stopped to contemplate for a moment. Hermione could tell that Harry had something to say and do here.
“I can leave you alone for a moment if you like” Hermione said to Harry.

“No,” Harry answered, “I want you in my life forever, I want to share everything with you…I figure that should start now.”

The two of them walked to the tomb of their former Headmaster. The area around it was clean and well kept; it reminded Harry of the opposite state that his parent’s graves had been in before he and Sean cleaned the area up. Now that Voldemort was gone, he thought to himself, Godric’s Hollow will probably recover and become what it once was.

Hermione squeezing his hand brought him back to the present, and the task at hand. He handed the urn to Hermione who took it in her soft and delicate hands. Every second that Harry was around her, he had to fight the urge to hold her and kiss her. He loved her so much, and he knew she loved him back.

Harry pulled off the top to the urn with his right hand and reached in to pick out a silver locket on top of the ashes. He held it in his hand a moment and then let the chain come over his fingers with the locket dangling down. He walked toward the tomb of his old mentor; Hermione walked a short distance behind him still holding the urn. Harry turned and put the top back on the urn, then began to speak to the white tomb before him.

“Well headmaster,” Harry said with a tone surprisingly void of emotion considering where he was and what he had just gone through. “I did it,” Harry continued to the tomb of Dumbledore. “I completed the training, I have mastered illegumency and occlumency, and I defeated Snape and Voldemort.”

Harry paused and beckoned Hermione to come to his side where he put his left arm around her shoulder as he moved the locket to his right.

“Sean and I found who R.A.B. was, it was Scrimgeour. He turned out to be the head vampire, and Sean killed him at about the same time I killed Voldemort.” Hermione reached up and squeezed Harry’s left hand affectionately. “I don’t need this anymore,” Harry said holding up the fake horcrux, “you gave your life to get this, so I figure that it is better suited to decorate your grave.”

Harry put the chain and locket in the palm of his hand and walked forward to the tomb while Hermione stayed behind. He paused one last time to remember all that the old Headmaster had done for him.

“I am forever in your debt Headmaster, and I want to thank you for all you did for me.”

Harry then placed his palm on top of the tomb and held it there for a moment before moving it off and leaving the locket on top. Harry then performed the bow and salute that Sean did for his Sagart to the tomb of Dumbledore and stood up.

“He would be proud,” Hermione said as she came up behind Harry and wrapped her free arm around his waist.

Harry turned around to hold Hermione in his own arms for a few moments.

“It’s not done yet,” Harry stated to Hermione who nodded and then gave him the small bag she had been carrying in her poc

The bag contained a small bit of gillyweed, not as much as Harry had used when he competed in the tri-wizard tournament nearly three years earlier, but enough for what he needed to do.

Harry gently took the bag from Hermione and opened it. He took out the weed and placed it in his left hand, he then gently took the urn from Hermione and spoke as he tucked it under his right arm.

“Wait for me?” he asked her as he prepared to carry out the final phase of Voldemort’s destruction.

“I’ll wait for you forever” Hermione said as she wrapped her arms around his neck and captured his lips in a brief but passion-filled kiss, which he happily returned.
Harry smiled as he put the Gillyweed into his mouth and swallowed it down. He knew he only had a few moments before he would be sporting gills and would need to get into the water, so he hurried into the lake, removing his wand from the waistband at his left hip. As his gills formed, he plunged himself into the lake, the added weight of the urn helping him to descend deeper faster. After he had sunk to a point where he couldn’t see without using his wand to perform the lumos charm, he figured he had gone deep enough. He gripped his wand between his teeth and opened the urn.

Harry glanced as all that remained of his greatest foe floated in the water that surrounded him. It was fascinating to him that a being so powerful and feared was now reduced to the same dust that accumulated on his shoes when he didn’t shine them for a few days. He watched the ashes of Voldemort and his horcruxes for a few moments before putting the top back on the urn and using his then free arm to swipe at the floating remains a few times to ensure that they were scattered. He then took the urn and threw it into the air, it did not go very high and began to sink, but this gave Harry time to get his wand from between his teeth and aim it at the urn.

“Obliviato!” Harry yelled as he pointed his wand to the urn and saw it reduced to mere dust particles.

He was about to breathe the refreshing sigh of having accomplished the impossible, but it would have to wait as his gills began to disappear. Harry swam for the surface at a calm but accelerated pace. He broke the surface and took in a deep breath.

His glasses were fogged, but he could see the shoreline easily enough and could now make out the outlines of three people waiting for him. He treaded water for a moment while he cleaned his glasses. He then recognized the two new figures as Bill Weasley and Sean O’Sullivan, the latter leaning against Bill to steady himself.

He came ashore and first approached Hermione who gave him a big hug and then kissed him right on the lips.

“Do you know any drying charms?” Harry asked after their lips parted.

“Of course I do,” Hermione responded. “But you look sooo sexy right now with your ripped body and your wet skin-tight shirt and pants that I don’t think I want you to be dry.”

Harry gave her an amused look before Hermione, rather reluctantly, performed the drying charm on Harry.

“You ready to go then,” Sean asked Harry.

“Yeah” Harry answered. He turned to Hermione; “I need to go back to the monastery with Sean for a few days. But I will be back here for the opening ceremony…save me a seat?”

“I won’t let anyone else sit next to me.” Hermione answered to Harry.

The two of them came together for a passionate kiss that had to have lasted at least twenty seconds as Bill and Sean turned to look away and give them some privacy. When Harry and Hermione came apart they rested their foreheads against each other and gazed lovingly into the other’s eyes.

“I’ll see you there then” Harry said to Hermione.

“I love you” Hermione said to Harry with resolute honesty.

“I love you too,” Harry answered with equal emotion and sincerity as he lifted Sean’s arm around his neck to support him…and then they vanished.
Chapter: 28

Chapter 28: Purification

Harry and Sean appeared about a mile outside of the monastery. Harry turned to Sean, who held his left boot in his hand with a bandage around where Scrimgeour had stabbed him in the left foot.

“Can you walk?” Harry asked Sean.

“Just let me lean on you” Sean said, “I don’t need you to carry me.”

They continued on for several minutes before they reached the gates and were greeted by the usual guard.

“Sean Alexander O’Sullivan and honorary Knight Harry Potter, Ireland and England respectfully. We are here with permission from the Priest for purification.”

After a few moments the gates opened and Sean and Harry walked in. Everything that was going on stopped as they saw Sean come in being supported by his student. Both of them were wearing what they had the night before, the clothes were stained with blood and Sean’s arrow case was completely empty.

The onlookers wondered what had happened and what Harry and Sean had been doing. They figured they had gone on an assignment, and that they had to have succeeded, but there was something about them that was different. The Sagart met them as they came in and spoke to Sean.

“And what happened?” the Priest asked Sean in Gaelic.

“We did it” Sean answered simply, “we all did it. Raiganzi and the Dark Lord are dead.”

The Priest clasped his hands together and uttered a brief but sincere prayer of thanks.

“I have a couple of things I want to give to you” Sean said to the Priest after a moment. Sean then handed the Priest his katana and the ring he had taken from the head vampire. “That’s the sword that killed Raiganzi and a ring I took from his finger after I killed him…do with them what you will.”

The Priest paused momentarily after accepting them and said, “these are going straight to the trophy case. A fitting tribute to one of the finest Knights in the history of the Order.”

The Priest then took the two young warriors into the building that doubled as his office and quarters. When Harry saw the trophy case, he remembered the sword he had wielded and presented it to the Priest, thanking him for the honor of using

They walked along the bottom floor, along the trophy case, the Priest stopped briefly to put the sword of Theseus back in it’s place and then continued onward, stopping when they got to a place with some room. The Priest opened the case and carefully placed the sword and ring inside.

“We will prepare an inscription for them immediately” the Priest said in English so that Harry could understand.

Harry smiled at this, and the three of them went up the stairs to the Sagart’s quarters. When they got there, Harry noticed them going towards a side door that he hadn’t noticed before. He figured that it must be the purification chamber.

Upon entering, Harry noticed that the room was very—there was no other word for it—celestial in appearance. The walls were the purest white he had ever seen, and it was decorated with paintings of men dressed in white and looking very
pure and almost angelic. Harry also noticed what appeared to be an operating table, set up in the middle of the room beside some kind of drain.

“I will go first” Sean said to the Sagart in Gaelic, “then I will take the boy to the chamber.”

Sean had been through this process before so he knew what to do. He removed the bandage and stood on his feet despite the pain in his left one. He then undressed completely until he was completely naked in front of the Sagart. Harry watched all this, paying attention to any ritualistic movements Sean might make.

The Priest looked Sean over for wounds that would mark that he had been changed, specifically bite marks, and when he found none brought a vial full of what looked like olive oil, along with an object that looked much like a wand, forward and faced Sean.

“You have faced a great evil of the outer world in this one. You have done this not for yourself, but for your fellow man, so that good and peace may ultimately reign on this Earth.”

He brought the wand out of the oil and made the sign of a cross on the bridge of Sean’s forehead, “may your mind be cleansed of any impure thoughts or malice toward your foe.”

The Priest then dipped the wand into the oil a second time and made the same sign of the cross over Sean’s heart.

“May your heart be cleansed of any hate that may have entered in the heat of battle, and may you continue on with a pure heart.”

The Priest motioned for Sean to lie on the table. The priest then brought a basin of water over to where Sean lay.

“This water,” the Priest began, “is symbolic of the blood of our Savior. Shed so that we may be made pure, now let His sacrifice purify your body and soul.”

The Priest then slowly and methodically emptied the basin onto Sean, first on the front part of his body, and then Sean turned over for the Sagart to pour the rest onto the other side of his body. Harry noticed the blood over Sean’s wounds flow away and the open wound on his foot become sealed.

“Like magic” Harry thought to himself.

After the water had been poured over Sean, the Priest spoke once more.

“Sean Alexander O’Sullivan, you have now been anointed and washed clean of the evils of the demons you have fought for God and man. Arise pure and continue to remain so.” Sean stood up and performed the bow and salute he did for his Sagart, then the Priest pulled a lever and the table turned over, pouring the water down the drain.

Sean said something to the Sagart as he waved Harry over. As Harry began to undress as he had seen Sean do, Sean put on a full body robe then crossed his arms over his chest as he waited for Harry to be finished. Harry raised his arms as he had seen Sean do earlier and waited for the Priest to continue. The Priest finished examining Harry and returned with the oil and wand.

The ceremony went along in the same fashion for Harry; the only difference was after the Priest had poured the water over him he called him by his full name, Harry James Potter, before pronouncing his final blessing.

After Harry had done his own bow and salute to the Priest, he dressed in the robe Sean held out to him. The two of them then left the room and continued down the hallway until Sean opened a door with a slot in the bottom for people to slide in food and showed Harry inside. The room was empty except for two beds and a few books.

“What’s this doing here?” Sean wondered aloud as he limped over to the falcon perch that was also inside.
"Probably for Regal" Harry commented from where he sat on the bed he had chosen.

"You’re probably right," Sean said, "he should still be at your house."

"So," Harry asked, "how come the water cleansed you like that?"

Sean smiled as he answered, "it’s like our own kind of magic, only ours comes from God. That water is blessed by holy men for the purpose of healing those who fight the evils of this world and the one below it."

Harry was awestruck by this, and he suddenly had a very real reverence for Deity run over him.

"Is this how Bill’s face healed so fast?" Harry asked Sean.

"Aye," Sean answered, "some Knights went to your mentor’s funeral and gave the nurse at Hogwarts an urn full of that water, which she used on Bill."

"What do we do for the three days we’re in purification?" Harry asked.

Sean paused before answering, "the solitary time during purification is normally devoted to meditation and contemplation." Sean paused a moment before giving Harry his suggestion, "I would suggest that you contemplate where your life is going now that you are free to live it."

Harry silently agreed with Sean about this, he did have a lot to think about concerning his future. A few moments later two plates came in through the slot in the door.

"We got here just before lunch," Sean said, "we will be out of here on Friday afternoon, and then you need to get back to your school."

They ate their lunch and then kept to themselves for the rest of the day. Harry spent most of his time looking out the window and thinking about his life. Now more than ever he was sure he would make a great Auror, he had his knowledge of magic and now, thanks to Sean’s strict and patient training, he had combat skills that were unrivaled in the magical world. He also wanted Hermione in his life, he knew he wanted to marry her, but he also knew that they should finish school first.

Sean sat cross-legged on the ground and meditated long and hard on all that had transpired in his life. He had not expected to survive the battle; now that he had he did not know what he would do. His purpose had been to serve the Order, but underlying it was always the desire to destroy the one who had killed his family. He emptied his mind and tried to search for answers, with his mind empty he listened to his heart and tried to find where it was leading him.

The first recognizable thing he saw was a beautiful girl, with long flowing red hair and perfect eyes that seemed to draw him in like one of Harry’s accio charms. He knew who she was, she was the only one who did this to him, she was Ginerva Weasley. He then realized that he was in the same state of mind that he had been when he was on the point of death, and he heard Bill’s voice begging him to stay for his sister.

Sean opened his eyes, he had accepted the fact that he was attracted to the young woman, but he did not know what to do at this point. He realized that he should have died that night, but that he was called back and responded. He was counting on staying in the Order of St. George, and he did not think that he would be allowed to marry or that she would want to be with him, but he also had to factor in that now that Raiganzi was dead, it would only be a matter of time before the vampires were extinct, and when that happened he would be relieved from the Order.

The second day came with Sean and Harry going about their usual routine of contemplation and eating when they had a visi

"Regal!" Sean said as his falcon swooped in and landed on the perch that had been set up there. Sean began speaking to
his falcon in Gaelic and stroking his head and feathers while Regal nipped at his finger affectionately.

“What’s this?” Harry said as he came next to Sean and pointed to Regal’s leg.

Sean looked and found a piece of parchment tied around Regal’s leg. He removed the note and began to read it.

“This is interesting” Sean said as he read the note.

“What does it say?” Harry asked.

“See for yourself” Sean said as he handed Harry the note.

The first thing Harry noticed was the Hogwarts seal and letterhead, it was identical to the note he received when he was still living in the cupboard under the stairs at 4 Privett Drive. He read the note:

Mr. O’Sullivan:

After recent events to which you were a partied, your presence is demanded at the opening ceremony for the upcoming Hogwarts term. The Priest at your monastery is here now and will also be present at the event. Please arrive promptly an hour before the ceremony so that we may seat you before the students arrive. We sent your falcon from Hogwarts, so if needed he can be used to communicate between you and the school. We look forward to seeing you, note that the ceremony is best dress.

Sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall, Headmistress.

Harry finished reading the letter and got a smile on his face as he turned to Sean. “Looks like you’ll be coming with me then?” he said to Sean.

“Indeed” he answered, “my presence is demanded.”

There was one more thing that Harry wondered about. He remembered that he felt there was something Sean was trying to teach him when they took the horses up the cliff. After two days in the purification chamber, he was confident that he knew the answer, but he wanted confirmation.

“Master?” Harry said to Sean.

“Hm?” he responded.

“I think I know what you wanted me to learn from that day we first arrived.”

“I was thinking that you hadn’t learned anything from that day” Sean began, “what is it that you learned from that experience Harry paused as he tried to word his thoughts. “I think that you were trying to show me that…when we are faced with a challenge that seems impossible, and we don’t know what to do. That if we will put our trust in someone who knows the way and follow them, that we will be led to where we need to go, and we’ll end up okay.”

A smile crossed Sean’s face as he answered, “I couldn’t have said it any better myself.” Sean’s face returned to his usual stone set expression as he continued, “but it is vitally important to choose a ‘someone’ who is a good man. There are many who can show you the way…but only some of them will take you down the right path.”

Sean ended this thought and then looked at Harry in an attempt to gage his reaction.
Harry looked at Sean, “I am glad that I had the fortune to fall in with Dumbledore and then you for mentors. You’re both real heroes.”

Sean answered in a tone that showed honesty, “I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again…I’m no hero.”

Harry decided not to pursue the subject, but he couldn’t help emptying his mind while he was facing Sean. The dream that Sean had about Ginny came into Harry’s mind, and he wasn’t sure how to react. After a while though, Harry began meditating on another point and wanted Sean’s input.

“Master” Harry said to Sean. “There was one other thing I wanted to ask you about.”

Sean turned his attention to Harry, “go on.”

“Well,” Harry began, “some time ago I went to a place where there was a prophesy about me. It said that my destiny was to either be killed by Voldemort or to become a murderer. Now that I am still alive, and he is dead, I was wondering…am I a murderer.”

Sean paused for a moment before giving his answer. “Do you remember what I told you that night under the stars about destiny?” Harry nodded. “Now is when you apply it. You chose to fight against a man who wanted you dead. No man, including you, is a murderer who fights and destroys evil in order to protect and preserve innocence and good. You are not a murderer.”

“But what about the prophecy?” Harry asked Sean.

“I will say this once and for all,” Sean began in answer, “no man’s fate is predetermined…nothing is written.”

The rest of the day passed in silence and contemplation with Sean wondering what he would do if all the vampires were destroyed, and with them the need for vampire hunters, and Harry wondering about what Sean had said and how he could talk to him about Ginny and what he saw.

When the two of them awoke in the morning, Harry was surprised to find that he awoke with more anxiety and apprehension then he had at any other time in his life.

Sean was still asleep, “that’s a first,” Harry thought to himself as he saw Sean sleeping peacefully.

“Maybe he’s dreaming of Ginny” Harry thought to himself with a smile.

After a while, their breakfasts were slid into the room. Harry decided that now was a good time to wake up Sean.

Harry shook Sean the way Sean had done to him so many times in the past several weeks. Sean awoke slowly and with a very confused manner, he hadn’t been awakened like this since he was six years old.

“What is it?” Sean asked with so much confusion in his voice that Harry found it difficult to stifle a laugh.

“Breakfast is here,” he said simply, “and there is also something I think you want to talk to me about before you go to Hogwarts.”

Sean didn’t believe in psychics, and he knew that he sure wasn’t one, but he could tell that Harry knew about Ginny.

Sean and Harry began to eat their oatmeal. There was an uneasy silence between the two of them.

“So,” Harry began to Sean thinking that this was all rather awkward, “how exactly do you feel about Ginny?”

Sean responded without pause, “you mean Bill’s sister Ginerva? She’s a good young girl, but I know that nothing will
happen between us.” Sean paused after saying this and sighed out, “I just think she was the first normal person I had ever met. Someone who wasn’t a demon or an Order member or someone that I needed to be official with.”

Harry nodded in understanding, realizing that it was good for Sean to have met Ginny; it was good for him to have had experience in dealing with normal people.

For the next little while, Harry talked to Sean about the normal proceedings of the Opening Feast, he figured that they would be similar to the upcoming opening ceremony.

“What do you think you will do now?” Harry asked Sean.

“I plan on returning here and then going after what’s left of the vampires.”

“Well” Harry said, “you may want to read this first, it came in with breakfast.” Harry handed Sean a note from the Priest.

“What does it say?” Sean asked to Harry.

“It’s in a foreign language,” Harry said “I figure that it’s Gaelic.”

Sean took the note, noticing that it had been written nearly a week before and read it.

My son:

I have been in correspondence with the supreme leaders of the Order and what we have been talking about will be of great interest to you seeing as how it affects you directly. If you are reading this, then you have succeeded and survived, and God be praised for it. The Headmistress of Hogwarts has invited us to the Opening Ceremony should the best happen. I would like you to talk with me for a while to discuss your future.

I understand that you will most likely want to continue with the Order, and that is good because there are still vampires out there and you are the best vampire hunter we have. However, the death of the head vampire would cause an effect to the other vampires that would undoubtedly lead to their extinction, in which case there would no longer be a need for vampire hunters.

The supreme leaders believe that the remaining vampire hunters are more than capable of destroying the remaining vampires. Therefore, effective immediately, you are hereby relieved of your status as a Knight of the Order of St. George.

However, the leaders of the Order wish you to still be affiliated with the Order. Specifically, since you are proficient in so many different methods of combat, they would like for you to train the Knights and new recruits. However, we are all in agreement that after the vampires have been destroyed, who you will be relieved from the Order as a Knight. The supreme leaders would still like for you to come and train as often as you can after this point. I will be praying that this letter finds you and that all goes well, I hope to see you at the ceremony. Sagart Michael O’Connell.

Sean paused after reading this, and just by looking at him, Harry could tell that what he had read struck a chord.

“Master?” Harry asked after a little while, “What is it?”

Sean thought for a moment about how to word what the letter entailed before answering.

“It’s from the Priest,” Sean said, “he says that I’m relieved from the Order.”

Harry could understand how much this affected Sean, he had said that the Order gave him purpose, and now he would soon be without that.

“They are relieving you entirely?” Harry asked with mild disbelief.
“No,” Sean said, “they want me to come back when I can to train Knights and new recruits in how to fight. But, that’s only in my spare time.”

Harry paused at this for a moment, he was wondering what to say next. He could see that the subject of his leaving the Order was upsetting to Sean, so he chose to change the subject.

“So,” Harry began, “looks like now you actually do have a chance with Ginny.”

Harry looked at his friend and mentor and saw the uncertainty sprawled across his face, obviously at the prospect of having a new kind of life than what he was used to. He wanted to help him, but he didn’t know how.

“Well,” Harry said after a while, “look at it as a new beginning…the possibilities are endless.”

Sean responded by saying “This will be completely new for me, it would be like you moving to a human city and taking some kind of desk job.”

Harry answered him after a brief pause, “I see what you mean.”

After a moment, an idea came to Harry. “I have a cousin who does boxing. In the Muggle world, being a fighter can be a very lucrative profession…and you’d be unbeatable.”

Sean smirked slightly at this, “you really think so?” he asked Harry.

“Yeah,” Harry answered, “you can kill a werewolf with your bare hands, so out boxing another Muggle shouldn’t be a problem for you.”

The rest of the time was spent by both of them in contemplation. Sean began to think about his future, but also remembered what had happened with him and Ginny some time ago. Now he knew that him getting married was a real possibility…and he didn’t want anyone to know, but he thought that he was falling in love with Ginerva Weasley. A few moments later, the door opened and a Knight informed them that their purification was complete.
Chapter 29: Return to Hogwarts

Harry and Sean made one last trip to the room they had occupied for Harry’s training. They both looked around it for a while when they realized that they had no reason to come there. Harry had only brought his wand, and he had left that with Hermione. Sean’s only real possessions were his weapons, and he wouldn’t need those where he was going. Sean had sent Regal back to Hogwarts with a note saying that he would attend the feast, so the falcon wasn’t at the monastery. He breathed a sigh as he looked around the room one last time.

Harry was imagining what it would be like for him to leave Hogwarts after he graduated. He was sure that it would be the same way Sean was feeling right now, and Harry felt some of the same feelings.

“Hey,” Harry said to Sean, “are you ready to go?”

Sean took a good look around at all his surroundings. He remembered everything about his life in the Order of St. George and how it had given him faith and purpose. He looked around his room one more time, most likely the last time and breathed a deep sigh before answering, “Aye, I’m ready.”

They closed the door behind them and left the room. Sean and Harry walked away from the monastery with many Knights pausing to look at them in silent respect.

After they got to the point where they could apparate, Sean grabbed Harry’s arm and they were off. They appeared at the same spot as the night before and decided to walk to Hogwarts. Sean’s foot had healed greatly since purification; but he still walked with a limp on his left side. As they made their way to the school, Sean spoke to Harry.

“Where’s the school?” he asked Harry, “all I see over there is an old ruin.”

Harry’s first instinct was to wonder what Sean was talking about, but then he remembered the protective spell on Hogwarts that caused Muggles to see it as an old ruin. He remembered that it must have been down the night of the Battle, because Scrimgeour made it so in order to get Voldemort and his forces inside.

“There’s normally a spell on the school,” Harry began to Sean, “to shield it from Muggle eyes, but it was down the night of the battle. I am sure that McGonagall or someone else will be there to lift it for you.”

Sean nodded, he didn’t quite understand it all, but he was sure that everything would go just fine. After a couple of minutes, he again spoke to Harry.

“Young old mentor would be proud of the Sagart and I coming here, he was striving to further relations between the wizarding world and the Order of St. George.”

Harry interjected at this point, “He’d be glad that the two of us have lived and trained together and destroyed Riddle and Scrimgeour.”

Harry and Sean made small talk for the rest of the way to the school. They were both dressed in their battle gear due to the fact that Harry had his robes at Grimmauld Place and that the Priest had brought Sean’s clothes to Hogwarts for him to change when he got there. A little ways before they got to the school, Kingsley Shacklebolt stood to greet them.

“Hello Harry” he said in his slow, deep voice, “it is very wonderful to see you again.” Kingsley’s attention then strayed to the man next to Harry. “And you must be Sean,” Kingsley said as he extended his hand. “Kingsley Shacklebolt.”
Sean took the large man’s hand and answered “Sean O’Sullivan.”

After a moment Kingsley spoke again, “McGonagall asked me to stay here and lift the spell off of you so you can enter and make your way through Hogwarts.”

Sean nodded, and Kingsley removed his wand and pointed it at Sean.

“Reveal!” Kingsley said in his strong voice and pointed his wand at Sean.

Instantly before his eyes, Sean saw the ruin transform into the glorious Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He was taken aback by this and staggered slightly, but Harry was there to make sure he didn’t fall.

Kingsley smiled, “My job here is done, I will see both of you at the ceremony.” He then bowed in respect to Harry and Sean and entered the school.

Harry and Sean then approached the main gate and did the same. There wasn’t anyone else there to greet them, but they were okay with that, they both wanted to just change into their clothes and relax before the ceremony. They eventually saw McGonagall and the Priest chatting in the outdoor area of the school and decided to go have a word…especially since Sean needed the Priest to tell him where to find his clothes.

They could hear the conversation as they approached the Headmistress and the Priest. McGonagall was trying to get answers for several questions she had about Scrimgeour.

“But how was he able to survive in the sunlight?” she asked the Priest with a confused tone.

“Well,” he began, “the man you knew as Rufus Scrimgeour was originally a Hungarian priest who delved too deeply into what we call the Dark Arts. His lust for power and immortality eventually led to him becoming the original vampire. When they grow old, they become very powerful, almost invincible. They begin to lose some of their weaknesses, in this case his vulnerability to sunlight--or he may have gained invulnerability from knowing magic.”

As they spoke, they looked to see Sean limping over with Harry walking beside him.

“There you are” the Priest said with a smile on his face, “I’m glad you could make it.”

Harry and Sean exchanged salutations with the two people before them. Sean constantly had a smile on his face at seeing the culmination of what had been his Sagart’s fondest wish, the union between the Order of St. George and Dumbledore’s world. McGonagall looked Harry up and down, she smiled as she saw the boy she had first seen as a baby, now a strong, handsome, and mature young man.

“Mr. Potter” she began, “you will find your things up in the same dormitory you have occupied every year here at Hogwarts. Your dress robes have been prepared and are on your bed, and, may I ask that you arrive an hour early…you will be joining us at the head table.”

Harry was taken aback at the announcement that he would be seated at the head table. Inside he wondered why he would be sitting there, but he had learned not to ask too many questions, that it was better to simply adapt to whatever situation he was placed in.

McGonagall then turned to Sean to address him, “I trust, Mr. O’Sullivan, that you got my note?”

Sean nodded in response to this and McGonagall continued.

“The Priest has taken the liberty of bringing your formal attire here to the school. He has requested that he take you to it, he wants to have a few words with you along the way.”
Sean nodded and gave a polite bow to the Headmistress before leaving with the Priest. Harry took his leave and made his way to his dormitory to prepare for the ceremony.

As Harry made his way to his dormitory, he noticed several students who had either remained at Hogwarts, or come back a little early, around where he was walking. The ones who noticed him coming, looked up and paused. Harry had become accustomed to people staring at him when they noticed his scar, mostly they would look at him with a sense of awe at seeing the famous boy-who-lived. But this time it was different, this time they looked at him with a sense of reverence.

When Harry would notice them looking at him, he would give them a nod. He realized that word had traveled fast around the school that it had been him at the Opening Feast and that he had destroyed, once and for all, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. He knew things would never be the same, “but,” he thought to himself, “in a very good way.”

He was right; things were already different and going very well for him. In the span of a few days, he had destroyed the bane of his existence, he had a very beautiful girlfriend, and now he was going to be sitting at the head table at the Opening Ceremony. Harry made his way to the Great Hall, and ascended the stairs to the portrait entrance.

“Oh, Mr. Potter,” the Fat Lady greeted Harry enthusiastically. “We are all so grateful for what you did, but we wonder…how were you able to do it?”

Harry paused for a moment before figuring that starting the flow of information here and now would prevent him from being questioned later. “Let’s just say that I had special training” Harry remarked with the confident monotone that he had developed by training with Sean.

Harry came into his dormitory and was surprised to see Ron Weasley waiting for him there. Ron was dressed in his robes, ready for the ceremony.

“Ron” Harry acknowledged emotionlessly as he approached his friend.

Ron hadn’t forgotten what he had seen several days earlier, he had first confronted Hermione about the scene on the couch, and she had confirmed that it was Harry she was with. But he wanted to hear Harry’s side of the story.

“Hello mate” Ron said with an equal lack of emotion, but more due to curiosity than anything else.

Ron remembered seeing Harry there on the couch, and he had looked completely different, he only wondered how different he was now on the inside. He had noticed that he looked different in a way that could be good or bad. He didn’t look like a boy wizard anymore, he looked like a hardened soldier.

The two of them looked each other over for a little while, each of them with memories running through their heads. They remembered their first meeting on the Hogwarts Express so many years ago, their many adventures together, playing Quidditch, and facing the good times and the bad together. Ron wondered if Harry even remembered the old days and if he was still even friendly. He wondered whether Harry had basically ravaged Hermione that night he had returned.

Harry and Ron looked at each other a little longer, each looking for some kind of sign from the other. Harry then cracked a smile as he realized it was all over and that he was free to be with his friends without worrying about losing them. Harry then cracked a smile, which Ron soon did also, and then the two of them came together in a masculine embrace.

“It’s so great to see you” Ron said to Harry with excitement, “you look so different” he added looking Harry up and down.

“Yeah” Harry answered, “I’ve been through a lot of changes over these past few months, and all for the better.”

Ron couldn’t help but be taken aback by the new look and voice of his best friend. Harry now spoke with a strong and deep voice; no trace of how he had spoken every other time Ron had seen him. He had a strong demeanor about himself that suggested absolute confidence, and his build was like that of a professional Quidditch player. Ron was a little nervous about speaking to him, wondering if he was still even the same person.
“Chocolate frog?” Ron asked slightly nervously handing one to Harry who took it slowly out of Ron’s hand.

“Thanks mate” Harry said as he unwrapped and ate it. Harry paused as the tasty treat entered his mouth and went down his throat, letting out a deep “mmm” as he did so, and added “it seems like years since I’ve had one of those.”

The ice had now been broken, and the two best friends began to talk about what had happened since they had last seen each other (awake in Harry’s case, he hadn’t noticed Ron when Ron had seen him and Hermione asleep together).

Ron and Harry talked for a little while, something they hadn’t had the opportunity to do for some time. Harry asked Ron about how things had been working with Fred and George, and Ron said it had been fun but he was always wondering what Harry was doing. Harry knew that he didn’t have enough time to tell Ron everything that had happened to him over the summer, so he paraphrased by saying that he had trained with Sean, then fought and destroyed Voldemort, and then gone with Sean for purification.

At this point, Ron could no longer contain his curiosity and desire to know about what was troubling his mind.

“How’s things been working with you and Hermione?” Ron asked in a more serious tone than he had been using. “I need to know what is going on with you and Hermione.”

“You two are my best friends,” Ron answered, “and I saw you sleeping on the couch a few nights ago…I just want to know what is going on.”

Harry had no problem telling Ron about all that had happened, Ron was after all his best friend. Harry began from the start, telling Ron about that first night in front of the Burrow fireplace. He told Ron about the other moments he and Hermione had had together before he left for training.

“Then when I came up after I fought Voldemort,” Harry said to Ron, “she was there standing guard. We started saying hello and then just ended up together on the couch.”

Ron stared wide-eyed at his friend as he finished his story. It was going to take some time for him to accept that his two best friends were almost lovers.

“So,” Ron began nervously, “did you two…”

“No” Harry answered knowing what Ron was getting at. “I took off my shirt because there was so much blood on it, and Hermione kept her nightgown on the whole time. We just slept next to each other.” Ron felt relieved knowing his friends weren’t yet lovers; the last thing he wanted was another complication.

“Well,” Harry said to Ron after a pause, “I have to get ready to go to the ceremony, McGonagall wants me to be there early.”

“Alright mate” Ron answered.

“Could you tell Hermione about me needing to go early and be at the head table?” Harry asked, and Ron nodded.

“Thanks mate” Harry answered. Harry then began to go to get ready.

“Hey” Ron called out.

“Yeah” Harry answered turning around to look at Ron.

“This should be a great year eh?” Harry smiled at Ron and merely nodded in response as he went to change into his robes for the ceremony.
Meanwhile, Sean and the Sagart were walking around the castle to where the Sagart had left Sean's formal wear for the ceremony. They walked slowly and spoke to each other in Irish Gaelic.

“Does it hurt” the Sagart asked Sean referring to his injured foot.

“Only a little” Sean answered, “I can walk on it fine, I just limp a bit.”

The Sagart began to speak to Sean in a serious tone, “I trust that you have read my letter about the rulers of the Order?” Sean nodded in response to this question and knew what was going to come next.

“As you know,” the Priest began, “you will be relieved after the vampires are extinct, but it is asked that you help in the training of Knights and new recruits.”

Sean realized that the Sagart had not said what he thought he would say. “I was under the impression that I was already relieved,” Sean said with confusion in his voice.

“About that,” the Priest said, “there is one more mission that you are being asked to go on before you are relieved.”

“Tell me” Sean answered in his usual strong voice.

“As you know,” the Priest began, “when the head vampire is killed, those who were changed by ones changed by him die and those who were changed by the head vampire himself become crippled. But, there is a ceremony, performed at a certain place and under a certain moon that can change one into a head vampire…Raiganzi himself was the first one to do it.”

“Yes I know,” Sean said, “but the only thing we know about that location is that it is somewhere in Hungary. We don’t know where it will be.”

After Sean finished, the Priest paused and had a gleam in his eye as he looked at Sean. Sean noticed the look and could figure out what it meant, “you’ve found the dark shrine of the head vampire?” he asked.

“Aye” the Priest responded, “some of our Hungarian Knights were looking for vampires the night you killed Raiganzi, and they found a group of them congregating at a certain spot. They would have killed them, but they heard them talking about a large meeting that will take place in two weeks under the right moon when they choose a new head vampire.”

Sean’s face brightened up greatly as he realized what this meant. “This could be a chance for us to eliminate the vampire threat for good. We only need to destroy the vampires when they assemble there and then destroy the shrine.”

The Priest smiled and politely applauded his former student. “The supreme leaders and I would like for you to take command of a group of Knights for this assignment.”

Sean paused for a moment to think this over, and then he realized that by taking command and succeeding, he could end his active service to the Order with honor and without regrets.

“I’ll do it,” he answered simply.

“Well then God be with you” the Sagart said to Sean, “and I hope that you can destroy the remaining vampires and then start to live the life that you should have had the chance to live all along.”

The rest of the journey was in silence as the Knight and the priest came to a room where Sean found the same clothes he had worn to Bill’s wedding waiting for him. He stripped down out of his battle clothes and put on his socks, shoes, shirt, kilt, and coat with his crucifix still around his neck. He came out a few moments later and he and the Sagart made their way to the Great Hall. When they arrived, they found Headmistress McGonagall waiting for them.
The first Sean noticed was that whoever cleaned up the Great Hall after the skirmish he and Harry had with the Vampires, Death Eaters, and Inferi had done a very good job. While he was taking in his surroundings, he hadn’t really been able to the last time he was there because he had been focusing on the battle at hand, McGonagall spoke to him and the Sagart.

“Welcome gentlemen” she bid them as they walked towards the head table. “Priest” McGonagall said to the Sagart, “I would be honored for you to sit on my right as our honored guest.”

The Sagart nodded, and McGonagall turned to Sean.

“And you Mr. O’Sullivan, will sit there between Harry Potter and Mr. Bill Weasley.”

After a few minutes, all of the faculty and others who would be sitting at the Head Table had arrived and taken their seats. Sean was not questioning Harry like Harry thought he would be doing…until his eyes wandered up to the ceiling.

The ceiling of the Great Hall had taken the form of a beautiful sunset stretching out across the heavens and conveying nothing but good, peace, beauty, and happiness.

“What is that?” Sean asked in quiet awe as he gestured to the ceiling. Bill was talking to Kingsley Shacklebolt, so Harry answered Sean’s question, remembering how he had felt the first time he had seen it.

“The ceiling of the Great Hall will change to different images. It has something to do with the overall mood in the room. But with Voldemort gone and everyone safe, it’s no surprise that it is beautiful and hopeful today.”

Sean smiled as Harry said the last part of his answer; he turned to Harry and placed a strong hand on his shoulder.

“And that is thanks to you” Sean said to Harry.

“Without your training I probably would have ended up leading myself and others into some kind of horrible oblivion” Harry said to Sean.

The two of them said nothing for a while and silently agreed with each other. After a bit, the students filed in and McGonagall decided to begin the ceremony.
Chapter 30: The Opening Ceremony

Hermione looked herself over once again in her bedroom mirror; she was so excited to be going out to the opening ceremony with her handsome knight that she was beside herself with anticipation.

“Oh will you come on already?” Demelza’s voice came in while Hermione made sure her hair was all right for the last time.

“I’m coming” she answered and went down to the Gryffindor common room.

She found Ginny, Demelza, Neville, Luna, and Ron there, but no Harry. She was about to ask where Harry was when Ron spoke up.

“Harry said for me to tell you that he’s been asked to sit at the Head Table at the ceremony.”

Ron hadn’t told anyone about this, so all of them were taken by surprise.

“Why do you suppose that is?” Neville questioned out loud to the group.

“They probably want to recognize him for killing You Know Who” was Luna’s answer.

Hermione beamed with pride at the thought of Harry being recognized as a hero for his efforts.

“Pity that Harry won’t be able to see you after all the trouble you went through” Demelza said to Hermione.

“He’ll just have to make it up to me later on” Hermione answered in a devious voice, generating laughs from the girls and a low groan from Ron, which earned him an elbow from his little sister.

The group was now making quite a buzz about the whole ceremony on their way to the Great Hall. Everything was new now, and they were all looking forward to having a normal year without the looming threat of the Dark Lord. They were all very jubilant at this point, except for Ginny. She had the idea now that she would never see Sean again.

“He probably just fought the battle and went back to the monastery to go after more vampires,” she thought to herself with spite. She then sighed inwardly and thought, “just like any brave and noble knight.”

The friends made their way into the Great Hall and saw that there was already quite a crowd assembled. The entire hall had been refitted to seat many more people than normal. Hermione noticed many Ministry officials and lots of other guests who were neither students nor faculty. A great many students and guests had already filed in and were enjoying some food that had been provided. There were many house elves catering to the guests, and one in particular came to the group as they arrived.

“Hermione Granger, how nice to see you here” it was Dobby.

“Hello Dobby” Hermione answered enthusiastically.

“Harry Potter has been telling Dobby all about Harry Potter’s adventures with Sean O’ Sullivan. And Harry Potter also told me about his special girl Hermione Granger.”

As Dobby finished this last part, a slight blush crept over Hermione’s face and she knew that there would be some explaining to do with her friends.
“Well,” Dobby said again, “Dobby must be getting back to work, enjoy yourselves.”

After Dobby left, Hermione and the others made their way towards their tables when Demelza stopped dead in her tracks.

“Merlin’s beard” she said in a mesmerized voice and with a look on her face to match.

“What is it?” Luna asked.

“Killer at two o’clock.”

Luna gasped as she looked at the table, just to the right of the center at the stranger sitting next to Harry.

Neville stopped as well, “I wonder who he is? He looks a little young to be the new Defense Against the Dark Arts or Transfiguration teacher.”

“I recognize him,” Ron said, “that’s Sean O’Sullivan. He was my brother’s best man…and hey, there’s Bill sitting next to him.

At about that time, Hermione and Ginny came to where the rest of them were standing and Hermione stifled a gasp. A big smile crept its way to Hermione’s face as she grabbed Ginny’s arm.

“Ginny look!” she exclaimed with delight as she positioned her best friend in front of her so she could see the head table.

“Look who’s sitting next to Harry.”

Ginny also stifled a gasp, much as she had five years ago when she found Harry in her house one morning. There was the man of her dreams in all his glory and his formal clothes.

“It’s him.” Ginny said barely above a whisper. Then she heard Ron nearby at the Gryffindor table.

“Mum! Dad!” Ginny looked over to see her parents, all her brothers, and Fleur seated at the Gryffindor Table with two seats across from them reserved for Ron and Ginny. Ginny ran and hugged her mum, Fleur, her brothers, and then her dad.

“What are you doing here?” Ron asked with delight.

“Almost the entire Ministry of Magic has been invited,” Mrs. Weasley said, “and Headmistress McGonagall said that we should especially be here—something involving Bill.”

Ginny made sure that her family knew how glad she was that they were there, but soon after sitting down her gaze drifted to the Head Table and the young Muggle sitting there.

Harry had just finished explaining to a very confused Sean how the food they were all eating just appeared seemingly out of nowhere, but Sean had more inquiries.

“So, those House Elves work here?” Sean asked Harry.

“Yeah” Harry answered.

“And you know that one named Dobby because he almost killed you during your second year?”

Harry laughed a little before answering, “yeah, funny isn’t it?”

Sean just smirked for his reply and then looked over to see the Sagart still talking with McGonagall. A smile came to Sean’s face as he realized that he was seeing the fulfillment of the desire of Dumbledore and the previous Sagart at his monastery, the reunion between the Order of St. George and the magical world.
At about that time, an even bigger surprise came to Sean when Nearly Headless Nick floated in.

“Good day Harry Potter,” he said as he tipped his head to Harry.

“Hello Nick,” Harry said with a quiet happiness in his tone.

Sean was looking at this as if it was the strangest thing he had ever seen, and it arguably was. In all his years of fighting demons and vampires, he had never seen a ghost; much less one who tipped it’s head to people. Sean had a look on his face that simultaneously conveyed surprise and that he was stupefied. Harry carried on his conversation with Nick just like he always did, not noticing the state his mentor was in.

“Let me just say,” Nick said to Harry, “how very proud all the other ghosts and I are of your accomplishments. And how you’ve grown since you’ve been here, it is an honor to know you and to have you in Gryffindor House.”

“Thank you Nick,” Harry answered with sincere gratitude, “but I couldn’t have done it without him.” Harry pointed to Sean and it was then that he noticed Sean’s expression. Harry figured that it would be a good idea to introduce the two of them.

“Nick,” Harry began, “this is Sean O’Sullivan, the man who trained me over the summer. Sean,” Harry paused not knowing exactly how to introduce the ghost in front of him and Sean, he settled for simply saying, “this is Nick.”

Ginny giggled as she saw the interaction between Harry, Nick, and a very confused and overwhelmed Sean.

“It’s so cute how naïve he is” she said more to herself but still loud enough for Ron, Fleur, and her parents to hear.

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley looked at their daughter and then sighed to themselves as they watched her awning over the young man they hoped she would one day marry. Hermione was balancing eating with filling Demelza and the other interested girls about her romantic moments with Harry and the night they had spent together in the Common Room. The question that they were the most on about though was Harry’s new haircut.

Meanwhile at the head table after Nick had floated off to talk with more of the guests, Sean was grilling Harry for more information concerning what had just happened.

“You mean to tell me that that was a real ghost and that there are more of them around this place?”

“Oh yeah,” Harry answered casually, “every house has one. Our History of Magic Professor is a ghost as well. And there are some who just hang around the place.”

Sean was very overwhelmed at all this, and immediately returned to his drink, almost wishing it had alcohol in it, after Harry had finished explaining about the ghosts.

Sean was eating the same food as the wizards and was finding that pumpkin juice was much to his liking. Harry was impressed with how well Sean was handling the new sensations and experiences. A smile came to Harry’s face when he noticed Hermione and the Weasleys at their table. When he saw Hermione’s gaze meet his, he gave her a wave and she waved back.

Sean had also noticed Ginny sitting at the table and was finding it harder and harder to concentrate on his dinner. An elbow to his side from Bill brought him back to the present.

“When are you going to make your move mate?” Bill asked.

“What do you mean?” Sean answered.

“Oh please,” Bill said slightly annoyed, “can’t you tell that my sister is nuts for you?”
Comprehension hit Sean like a ton of bricks when he realized that from the moment they first met—she really had been smitten with him, as he felt himself becoming with her.

“It can never be,” Sean said after a moment’s pause, “these hands,” Sean said as he held up his two calloused hands, “have killed too many and spilled too much blood to be worthy of something so fair and gentle.”

Bill did not fail to notice how Sean referred to his sister, and he spoke to him. “My sister is a young woman now. She is capable of making her own decisions. You should tell her what you told me and let her choose whether or not she would have you.”

Sean stopped in thought, and then began fidgeting with his crucifix, something he always did when he was nervous or embarrassed, with his left hand as his right brought up his mug for a long drink of pumpkin juice. After a few more moments, Headmistress McGonagall tapped her glass to quiet down the assembled masses.

“Attention” she called out in a voice barely loud enough for everyone to hear. When they quieted down, she began to speak. “As I’m sure that you have noticed, we have some special guests here today,” she said as she looked first to her right at the Sagart and then to her left at Harry, Sean, and Bill.

“But first,” she continued, “I have a few announcements to make. First off, the position of Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher will be filled by Kingsley Shacklebolt of the Auror office.”

Kingsley stood up and bowed graciously to the applause that greeted him. McGonagall then introduced Nymphadora Tonks as the new Transfiguration professor and head of Gryffindor house, and this was met with thunderous applause as w

“And also,” McGonagall said, “after the battle here at this very school that left Rufus Scrimgeour dead, the new Minister of Magic has been named.”

There was a moment of silence in the room as they anticipated who it would be. McGonagall then spoke, “and his name is Alastar ‘Mad-Eye’ Moody.”

Moody had been seated at the head table, but had insisted on not being seated at the head, wanting to make room for the special guests. He did however get up and speak.

“Students of Hogwarts, faculty, and all others here assembled. We have been living in fear and worry for the past several years. We have received devastating blows from friend and foe alike. We have been faced with an ever-present threat…and we still are now. But, let me assure all of you that as I reluctantly accept this new position, I will fill it with integrity, strength, and an unwavering determination to see that all people in this world, Wizards and Muggles alike, will always enjoy the protection of the Ministry of Magic from any and all of those who would try to destroy this peace we have recently obtained. I thank you all and hope that you will place your confidence in me, as I will do all in my power to ensure that that confidence is well placed.”

With this, the new Minister of Magic sat down to a thundering applause from those assembled. All the students and others assembled knew enough about the real Mad-Eye Moody to know that what he had said was true and now felt a great relief knowing that they were in good and capable hands.

“Now, without further adieu” McGonagall began again, “I wish to present our guests and proceed with the chief event of this ceremony.”
Chapter: 31

Chapter 31: The Medal of Uncommon Valor

The assembled crowd was watching and listening intently at the prospect of finally learning whom the special guests were that McGonagall had mentioned. They all immediately recognized Harry Potter, and a few Bill Weasley, but they could tell that there were more special guests than just the two of them. McGonagall began to speak after a brief pause.

“I would like to tell all of you about something that you may have heard before that you thought was a myth.”

After this, McGonagall shared the story of the Order of St. George with the students. She spoke of St. George and the Dragon, about the forming of the Order and how it was a fond wish of the late Albus Dumbledore to see the Order of St. George reunited with the Magical World in harmony and cooperation towards the safety of both their worlds.

“Sadly,” McGonagall said, “due largely to corruption in the Ministry and their constant hounding of the former headmaster. He was unable to forge strong relations with the Order. But, Minister Moody and myself wish here and now to proclaim that alliance reformed.”

McGonagall gestured to her right to the older man sitting there.

“This is Priest Michael O’Connell of the Order of St. George and he is in charge of the Ireland branch of the Order.”

After finishing this introduction, Moody stood up so that he and McGonagall were facing the Priest. Moody held a fairly large hand mirror in his hand and began to speak.

“On behalf of the Ministry of Magic and the wizard world. I wish to present you with this mirror. When you speak a name into it, it will immediately show you where they are. And when they are by their own mirror, your image will appear and the two people will be able to converse. I have one in my own office, as does Headmistress McGonagall. We will be arranging to have a full-sized mirror like this sent to your monastery in Ireland. Now, let us make it official, may this alliance between the Order of St. George and the world of magic last forever.”

The Priest paused for a moment, not out of hesitation but to show emphasis for what he was about to do, then took the mirror from Moody and shook his hand.

Those in attendance, including the ghosts and figures in the paintings, applauded as the two men shook hands, showing the fulfillment of the dreams of Dumbledore and so many of the past leaders of the Order of St. George.

Collin Creevy and several photographers for The Daily Prophet and other wizard publications were in front with their cameras and taking pictures, every one of the photographs were worth far more than a thousand words as they embodied so much. After standing and shaking hands for a few moments, the new Minister of Magic and the Priest of one of the more powerful of the St. George Monasteries returned to their seats as the applause died down.

McGonagall again rose to her feet and began to speak. As she spoke, Minister Moody could be seen handling some kind of elaborate looking box.

“That was only the first part of this special ceremony” McGonagall began, “for the next part, Minister Moody and I will be making some very special presentations.”

There were whispers around the Great Hall after this wondering what presentations would be made and whom the recipients would be. Hermione especially lit up thinking that her Harry was about to be honored in some way—which he absolutely deserved. The Weasleys also realized that this was probably why they had been invited, that Bill would be
honored. Moody stood up and held the box in his hands.

“Inside this,” Moody began, “is the Medal of Uncommon Valor. This is the highest honor that the wizarding world bestows upon witches or wizards who perform acts so selfless, brave, and noble, that they are considered above any kind of duty that one can aspire to. The Ministry has not awarded this medal in over two-hundred years, so it would be good for all of us to mark this day as one very special and truly monumental.”

When Minister Moody finished, he paused to allow the reporters to take notes and for the photographers to prepare for what was to come. All the students were now quietly buzzing among themselves, for they were about to be witness to something truly monumental, this would be a night to remember. After a few moments of pause as Moody held up the case for the Medal of Uncommon Valor, McGonagall arose and took the case from Moody and also held a couple of rolled-up scrolls which she placed on top of the case.

“Now,” Moody began, “we will be presenting this medal, and I ask that you please wait for me to applaud before joining in. For bravery above and beyond anything ever asked, for brilliant planning and execution, and for willingness to do whatever necessary for the protection of the wizarding world, even to the sacrifice of his own life. I present Mister William Arthur Weasley with the Medal for Uncommon Valor and a promotion to the Order of Merlin, First Class.”

Bill stood up straight and tall, turned, and made his way to Minister Moody. Mrs. Weasley shed tears of joy as she watched her oldest son, the first to receive the Medal in over two hundred years, walk to where the Minister of Magic and Headmistress of Hogwarts now stood.

McGonagall handed Moody the medal, which consisted of an elaborate golden chain attached to a majestic solid gold talisman an inch and a half thick in the shape of a circle with a majestic Phoenix engraved in the center and the words, For Uncommon Valor, Bravery, and Courage In the Fulfillment of Duty engraved along the sides around the Phoenix.

When Bill approached Moody, he stopped and Moody raised the medal up into the air. Bill gave a half bow as Moody put the medal around his neck, then Moody one of the scrolls from McGonagall and handed it to Bill. The two of them then shook hands, with several cameras flashing as they did so. Moody whispered something to Bill, who nodded and took a couple of steps backward, standing up straight and facing the assembled crowd.

All the Weasleys were on the verge of tears of joy, even Percy. Fleur was especially emotional seeing her husband, the man she loved, being honored in such a way. Fred and George were making comments to each other.

“Our older brother a hero” Fred said. “I always knew he had it in him” George said. “To think,” Fred began, “after all the flack that we got…” “…from the bloody ministry…” George interjected, “…they go and give our dear elder brother…” “…the most prestigious medal in the wizard world” they ended together.

Bill smiled at his family from his place behind the Head Table, he was still clearly visible though, so his family could see and return the smile. Mr. Weasley was very proud of his son, but he kept himself together emotionally despite the huge grin of fatherly pride on his face as he put his arm around his sobbing wife. Charlie had a look that suggested he was saying “well done mate” on the inside. Ginny was very proud of her big brother as well, she had always looked up to him, and now the rest of the wizard world would to.

After a moment, Moody began again. “For the second recipient,” there were almost audible gasps from around the room at the thought of not one, but two people receiving this most prestigious medal.

Moody continued after things quieted down a bit, “I wish to announce first off that he has showed the valor embodied in this medal since the first day he stepped foot on these grounds. Knowing of his past and that he would be hunted, he chose to fulfill his destiny and live up to what his parents were and what he is. For uncommon bravery, valor, courage, and for outright integrity at all times and in every aspect of his life. I, on behalf of the Ministry of Magic and the entire wizarding world, award the Medal of Uncommon Valor and the rank of Order of Merlin First Class…to Harry James Potter.

Harry was very surprised at this; he had not expected to be honored like this. He had been so focused on fulfilling his
destiny and on protecting Hermione and the others he cared about, that he had failed to see that what he had done really was a brave thing.

“Go on up” Sean said to Harry, bringing him out of his shock.

Harry stood up straight and looked as dignified as he could as he approached Moody. McGonagall beamed with pride as she handed Moody the medal, which Harry bowed down to receive.

As Moody handed Harry the scroll and shook his hand, he whispered in his ear “I always knew you had it in you my boy…your parents are very proud of you.”

The cameras of the photographers flashed to no end as Harry went through the process of receiving the medal and induction into the Order of Merlin. Harry choked back tears as he turned to the assembled audience and stepped back to where Bill was standing. Tears welled up in Hermione’s eyes as she saw the man she loved being honored like this in front of the wizarding world.

“He deserves this so much” she thought to herself, “he is my hero.”

The Weasleys, who were Harry’s surrogate family, were also beaming with pride and joy at his and Bill’s accomplishment.

Ron was particularly proud of his best friend, the boy he first met on the Hogwarts Express so long ago. He was on the verge of tears when Demelza, who was sitting next to him, gently held his hand in hers. After she had made a summer visit to the shop, she and Ron had talked and had discussed dating once the school year started, now they looked at each other and both could see that dating would be a good thing--to start with.

Ginny was also proud of Harry, but her eyes traveled to the young Knight who was now sitting by himself and beaming with pride at his young protégé.

Ginny sighed, “It’s not right that he can’t be recognized for all he did.”

After Harry had taken his place next to Bill, and the photographers had been given ample opportunity to photograph the two of them together, Moody once again began to speak.

“While it has been more than two centuries since the Medal of Uncommon Valor has been awarded to a wizard or witch. It has never been awarded—to a Muggle.”

There was even more buzzing among the students and the press at this, “a Muggle will be receiving the award?” some of them said to themselves, “no that’s impossible,” “but then what is the Minister implying?”

Ginny also tensed up and her heart immediately began to race. “Oh my God” she said to herself “are they really going to…” After a few seconds, the Minister continued.

“So, in recognition of his bravery, courage, uncommon valor, selfless actions, and at least a score of other attributes that embody everything that this medal stands for and that he has practiced all his life. It gives me great pleasure to award the Medal of Uncommon Valor to the first ever non-wizard or witch recipient. Knight of the Order of St. George, Sean Alexander O’Sullivan.”

This took Sean completely by surprise. For a moment, he didn’t know which way was up. But it only took him a moment to realize what this meant and that it was his duty to accept.

He stood up straight and tall, as if he had rehearsed this or knew that it was coming. Many people looked at the Muggle clothing he was wearing. His dark coat reflected the light from the ceiling of the Great Hall, and it made the brass buttons shine. He stood resolutely, proudly sporting the colors of his clan on his kilt. He turned and walked to where Moody now stood and bowed to receive the medal that was placed around his neck.
As he bowed, Sean moved his crucifix to the side so that the medal would not go over it. The Sagart looked like he was about to burst with pride as he watched the boy he had loved and raised as his own son accept this great honor.

Sean arose, the first Muggle to ever receive the highest honor in the wizarding world, and shook Moody’s hand. As he did, Moody whispered to him, “I would be honored if you would step back with the other recipients for a moment.”

Sean nodded and did so. The cameras were going off wildly at this, the reporters were all determined to find out everything they could about this young man who had been honored so and introduced as a Knight of the Order of St. George. Sean stepped back and ended up between Bill and Harry. The three of them said nothing as they continued looking forward and waiting for instructions.

Moody paused to allow the photographers to take pictures of the three heroes with their medals around their necks.

“I present to you,” Moody said after a while, “William Weasley, Harry Potter, and Sean O’Sullivan, the three heroes of Hogwarts.”

Moody then stepped to the side so that there was nothing in between those assembled and the three young men they were honoring, and applauded.

The entire assembly, even the press, began to wildly applaud the three heroes. Ginny wasted no time in rising to her feet to applaud Sean, who noticed her for the instant that only she was standing and smirked. An instant after Ginny had risen to her feet, the entire assembly, including the Slytherins, had done likewise and were now applauding and cheering the three men who had done more than any others to eliminate the threat of the Dark Lord.

Bill, Harry, and Sean, just stood there not quite knowing what to do next as the standing ovation and the returning flashes of the cameras greeted them. Harry though, thought of something that he wanted to say to his friend and mentor.

“Well master,” Harry said.

“Aye” Sean said back.

“Looks like you’re going to have to face it now.”

“What do you mean?” Sean asked Harry.

“You really are a hero” Harry answered matter of factly.

“Being a hero is a lot more than receiving a medal Harry,” Sean answered immediately.

“I know,” Harry answered, “Minister Moody said what it entails when he said why you were being awarded the medal.”

Sean didn’t know how to respond, he never considered himself a hero, just a Knight who fulfilled his oaths and did what was required of him. Bill then gave his friend a playful slap on the back as his form of congratulations, Sean responded with a slap of his own to Bill and the three of them stood together facing their ovation.

The applause never died down, even with the photographers attempting to get some good shots of the three heroes standing together. After about five minutes of the standing ovation, McGonagall rose to her feet and raised her hand to politely call for a stop to the applause. After the applause had died down, she invited Bill, Harry, and Sean to return to their seats.

“We would like to thank Minister Moody and the three young men we honored here. I would also like to announce to the Hogwarts students and faculties, that these next days before the term starts, and the days after, will be filled with festivities. There will be fireworks, music, dancing, feasts, and many other great events to celebrate the monumental
occasion for which we now honor them. I call this ceremony dismissed."

The press figures immediately stood up and waited by the head table for the heroes to come down so that they could get interviews.

Harry turned to Bill; “I’m going to sneak off real quick, cover for me?”

Bill nodded and Harry immediately ducked out through a secret passageway he had found before the ceremony using the Marauder’s Map.

Bill immediately made his way to his family. Sean walked over to the Priest and the two of them came together in a very heartfelt embrace.

“I am so proud of you my son,” the Priest said to Sean in Irish Gaelic.

“Everything I am,” Sean answered in the same language, “I owe to you.”

After he said this, Sean began to remove the medal to place it around the neck of his Sagart. But the Priest brought his hands on top of Sean's to prevent him.

“You keep that” the Priest said, “you earned it and deserve to wear it…show it to your own son one day.”

Sean paused for a moment after the Priest said the words “your son.” Sean had never thought he would have children, and he looked at the Priest. He found that the Priest’s eyes were looking past him to a young and beautiful red-haired girl who was staring at Sean despite the fact that her brother was on his way.

“Is that her?” the Priest asked pointing to Ginny.

Sean looked to be sure that he was pointing to Ginny and answered “aye” through a chuckle at Ginny turning away embarrassed after she and Sean’s eyes met.

“She is a beautiful young woman,” the Priest continued, “go to her, tell her how you feel.”

Sean smiled slightly and then hugged the Priest again before moving from the head table and making his way towards the Weasleys. The Priest smiled and began talking to Minister Moody and others at the Head Table. He even diverted the attention of the reporters to himself and began answering questions about the Order and Sean.

Bill made his way past the press and into the arms of his loving wife who held him close and kissed him.

“My ‘ero” Fleur said after the two of them came apart.

Next came Mrs. Weasley with a big hug and a kiss on the cheek. She wanted to say how proud she was of her son, but she was so choked up that all she got out was a whispered “I’m so proud of you.”

Bill’s brothers then all came up to him and shook his hand, Hermione did so as well offering him congratulations, and Ginny gave him a bug hug as they all began eyeing and fingering the medal hanging around his neck.

After a few moments, Percy, Charles, Fred, George, Ron, and Ginny all moved aside as their father approached. Mr. Weasley faced his oldest son, who stood up straight and looked straight back at his dad. Words were not needed between them as their looks spoke volumes.

Eventually, Mr. Weasley extended his hand to Bill and said, “Well done my boy, very well done.”

Bill shook his dad’s hand, and then took the medal from around his neck and put it around his father’s. Mrs. Weasley
couldn’t contain herself and began sobbing happily as her husband and first-born went through this exchange.

“I told you before that everything I am I owe to you dad,” Bill said. “You deserve to wear that medal more than I do. You’ve devoted your life to the cause, you embody all the virtues Moody talked about. And without you, I wouldn’t know right from wrong or what it means to have integrity and valor.”

Mr. Weasley smiled, looked at the medal for a moment, and then took the medal from around his neck and put it back around his son.

“But son,” he said, “you are wrong. You earned this medal, now you keep it.”

Mr. Weasley and Bill then embraced. Afterwards, Bill stopped and looked around, he noticed that Harry had snuck out like he wanted to, and he noticed Sean apparently finishing talking to the Priest.

Bill called out, “hey Sean” and then waved him over to where he was once he got his attention.

Sean made his way over to where his friend was, Ginny moved behind where Ron and Demelza were standing and attempted to fix herself up a little before Sean came over.

“Sean my old friend” Bill said as he and Sean grabbed each other’s left shoulder and simultaneously used their free hands in a handshake. “Congratulations, if anyone in the world deserves that medal, it’s you.”

Sean smiled slightly at this before saying, “I was just doing my sworn and sacred duty.”

Sean was not expecting for all the Weasleys and Hermione, who was looking around for Harry, to then talk to him…but that’s just what they did.

First was Mr. Weasley who shook his hand and said “this is a proud day for us all. And we are glad to see you get some recognition for the kind of thing you have been doing all your life.” Sean returned the handshake and gave Mr. Weasley a no

Mrs. Weasley then came up and hugged Sean in a way that he only remembered his mother doing to him once when he was very young. “We are so proud of you” Mrs. Weasley said, “and so glad to know you. Know that you are welcomed at our home any time, it’s an always open invitation.”

Sean had met the Weasley brothers at the wedding, they all came over to him and they exchanged greetings and congratulations. Sean was also introduced to Demelza.

He took her hand and kissed it, as was his custom, and then said, “I am very pleased to meet you milady.”

After seeing the cavalier young man and hearing his deep, Irish accented voice, Demelza thought that she would melt.

“He is so dreamy” she thought to herself, being careful not to let out too much since Ron was standing next to her. Then Fleur came up and kissed Sean on both of his cheeks and spoke to him in French.

“Thank you so much for all that you have done for my husband and I, and for our world.”

Sean merely smiled and then said back to her in French “It was my pleasure Missus Weasley. And I hope to be seeing a lot more of you and your family.”

Hermione then came up to Sean and gave him a kiss on the cheek. “Thanks so much for all you have done,” she said to him, “and especially for helping Harry. I talked with him a little when he first got back, and I can tell that you did a very good job of teaching him.”

Hermione then gave Sean a big hug and got a concerned look on her face. “Where is Harry anyway?” she asked aloud to
Bill spoke at this point and said, “he told me he was going to sneak out for a bit. Had something to do.”

“No one in particular.”

“Where would he have gone?” Hermione thought out loud to herself. Sean thought for a minute and then thought of something that might happen.

“If I were you,” he said with emphasis on the word “you” “I would check at the astronomy tower.” Hermione gave a nod and then was off.

Ginny knew that there was no one left between her and Sean now, and she suddenly felt nervous. Their eyes met for a moment, and then Sean turned his back to her.

Ginny’s heart sank, “is this him saying that he doesn’t want anything to do with me?” she thought to herself as tears threatened to well up in her eyes.

Sean turned to face Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. “With your permission” he said in a very respectful tone, “I would like some time alone with your daughter.”

The boys, except Bill, were very surprised, and Mrs. Weasley was so happy with this request that she thought she would faint.

Mr. Weasley was composed enough to look at Sean with a kind, fatherly, and approving expression and say, “of course you may, I’m sure she knows of a place nearby where you can be alone.”

Sean gave Mr. Weasley the salute they gave in the Order of St. George, and then gave him and Mrs. Weasley a respectful bow. He then walked over to Ginny, who hoped that she didn’t look too ecstatic. He stopped a couple of steps away from where she was and held out his hand, which Ginny took and then Sean bowed to kiss her hand.

Sean then offered Ginny his arm and said, “Hello Ginerva, would you like to go somewhere away from all this for a little while.” Ginny’s eyes lit up at this and she could only manage a nod.

“If you would please lead the way my lady” Sean said in his cavalier manner. Ginny took Sean’s arm and led him out of the Great Hall.

All the Weasleys and Demelza looked after the two of them as they walked off. Mrs. Weasley was ecstatic that her daughter would get to spend some time with the man of her dreams. The boys were all confused about what was going on, and Demelza was still swooning about the young Irish Knight who had made her acquaintance.
Chapter 32: Destiny

Harry stood at the highest point of the Astronomy Tower and looked into the heavens. He was looking for something, or rather someone, in the stars that blanketed the night sky. It was a clear night, and he could see forever. In the past, he would have looked into the stars to remember Hermione, but tonight he was remembering something that Sean had told him and was looking for the memorials for a few people who he wanted to be with him to see him get the honor that they had sacrificed so much for him to achieve.

He found Sirius, the Dog Star, first because he had done so many times, and he figured that this was the memorial for his godfather Sirius Black. He then looked around to find either familiar stars or patterns of stars that he was sure he could find later. He eventually found three of them and then he named them in his mind.

“That one will be Dumbledore, that James, and that one Lily” Harry thought to himself.

After having decided on what to use for the ultimate final memorials for the four people who had loved and helped him the most in getting to where he was and who had passed on, he spoke out loud to them as he held up his medal.

“Well,” Harry began with a strong voice, “I don’t know if you could see from where you are up there. But I wanted to show the four of you this. You probably all know what it is and that it hasn’t been awarded in a very long time. I wanted to thank all of you individually for helping me get to this point.”

Harry paused at this point and wondered in what order he should thank them. He decided to first thank Dumbledore since he had spent the most time with him. He then decided that he would thank Sirius and then his parents.

“Headmaster” Harry began while looking at the pattern of stars he had designated as Dumbledore’s monument. “You were the one who taught me to do the right thing and who helped me realize my potential. You were always there for me while I was here at school, and you were there to help and protect me when I needed it. I know that I can never do anything to completely thank you for your help and guidance. But I will do my best to live up to the potential you saw in me. Thank you headmaster, and I hope that wherever you are you are receiving the honor and recognition you deserve.”

Harry then gave Dumbledore the same salute he had learned and seen during his time with the Order of St. George. He then turned to the star Sirius and began to speak.

“Sirius, you were the closest thing to a real and loving parent that I ever knew. I owe you so much, you gave me love, guidance, and you taught me to always bring honor to the ones I love and who love me. I miss you a lot, and I want you to know that this medal should be around your neck and not mine. But I will honor your memory by wearing it. Thank you for everything Sirius, I will always treasure the time we had together, and you will always be like a father to me.”

Harry had settled on combining the patterns he had designated as Lily and James to make one constellation. He figured that they were married and in love, so it was only right for them to be united in the eternities. He did not have much to say to his parents, but he did his best.

“Mum,” Harry began, “and Dad. I never knew you, but I know that you were the ones who made it possible for me to even survive to this point. I know that I have no real memories of you, but I will honor the name you gave me. I love you both very much, even though I don’t remember you, because I know that you loved me enough to sacrifice yourselves so that I could live.”

Harry paused and held up his medal to them, “I wanted you, Sirius, and Dumbledore to see this. This is a result of all you did for me, and I want you to know that what you did was not in vain. Voldemort is gone now, and the Wizard world is
united with the Order of St. George..." Harry turned to the Dumbledore constellation, "...just like you wanted. I want to thank you all one last time, and know that I now know where to find you, and I will never forget any of you."

Harry finished his talk, but kept looking up at the sky. He wished that they could appear to him and put their hands on his shoulders and tell him personally how proud they were. But he knew that some things were impossible, and then he heard a quiet sniffling behind him.

He turned to see, standing in the doorway leading up to the tower, the figure of Hermione Granger. He could see that she was sobbing, and he figured that she had been standing there for a little while. He turned to face her, the moonlight reflecting off his glasses and putting a shadow on his short spiky hair. He held out his arms as she walked up to him, Hermione leaned into the embrace and held him tight.

“They would all be very proud of you,” she said after a few moments and when she had stopped sobbing. “I had forgotten that none of the people you would have really liked to have been at the ceremony were there.”

Harry gently pushed Hermione away from him just enough so that she could face him and kept his hands on her shoulders, “That’s not true” he said, “the Weasleys were there, Hagrid, McGonagall, and especially you.”

Hermione smiled at this and then leaned back into Harry. The two of them wanted to just stand there and hold each other all night, they never wanted to let go or change anything about the moment that they were now sharing. While they were doing this, Hermione felt the urge to ask Harry something.

“Harry,” she began “why were you talking to the sky when you were saying those things.” Harry smirked and then took Hermione’s hand to lead her to the edge of the tower where he had been standing.

“Sean once told me,” he started, “that there was a legend that when heroes and other great people died they were immortalized in the stars. I know that Dumbledore, Sirius, and my parents were heroes and great people, so I just had to find their memorials in order to pay them tribute and express my gratitude.”

Hermione looked at the sky, “tell me where they are.” she said to Harry.

Harry then took a few moments to point out the constellations he had designated for his parents and guardians. Hermione gazed at them for a few moments and Harry just stared at the woman he loved. Harry then remembered something that she had said what seemed like years ago when the two of them were under another starry night.

“You once asked me,” Harry began to Hermione, “if I believed in destiny.”

Hermione turned to face Harry as he spoke this, “and as I recall,” she said in response, “you never answered.”

Harry then gave Hermione his answer. “Sean told me that our destinies are our choice. And that nothing is written in the stars or carved in stone.”

Hermione smiled as she answered, “tell that to professor Trelawny and Firenze.”

Harry smiled at this but then got serious, he gently cupped Hermione’s chin and said. “I have chosen my destiny.”

Hermione paused at this before asking “and what is that Sir Harry,” she smiled as she used the term Sir to allude to Harry’s being an honorary Knight of St. George. Harry quickly took Hermione’s hand and stood up to face the sky. After the two of them were facing the sky, Harry called out to the constellation for his parents,

“Mum, Dad” he said, “this is Hermione Granger, she’s wearing the bracelet you gave to Mum, Dad--she’s the girl that I am going to marry.”

Hermione gasped at this, had she heard him right, had he said that he was going to marry her? Harry then turned his gaze
back to the beautiful young witch at his side.

"I really meant that," Harry said, "I want to marry you one day. That is the destiny I have chosen, to spend the rest of my life and then the life after this one with you."

“Oh Harry” Hermione said as she embraced him and the two of them came together in a passionate kiss.

They stayed like that for a long time, and if they had been watching the sky, they would have seen the slight change in brightness in the stars that made up the constellations for Dumbledore, Sirius, and the Potters.

Back at the ceremony, Bill sat down with his family and his wife and started talking with them. They all had many questions for him, they wondered especially about the battle outside the school and about his Irish friend. After Bill explained about Sean and his profession, as well as how he had met him, his brother Percy asked him an interesting question.

"Will you be going back to work for Gringott’s?"

"I suppose so,” Bill answered, “I don’t see why I wouldn’t go back to work.”

“I just figured that now that you are a great hero and will no doubt be revered as more of a warrior than a banker,” Percy said, “that you would be changing professions.”

Bill had not thought of this, but now that the idea was in his mind, he realized that it did make sense.

“Dad” Bill said to his father, “if I was to change professions, what would you suggest?” Mr. Weasley thought for a moment about his answer.

“Well,” he began, “you would have no shortage of connections within the Order of the Phoenix, especially now that Moody is the Minister of Magic. I would say that with a little training, and your background in curse breaking, you could become an Auror.”

Bill realized that he had a lot to think about. And unknown to him, he was only going to have more on his mind.

At about this point, his wife Fleur spoke to him, “Bill dahling, could I talk to you in private for a moment?”

Bill nodded and the two of them got up and left the room.

When they were alone, Bill spoke to his wife. “What is it,” he said with concern in his voice, “are you okay?”

“I am fine” Fleur answered, “I ‘ave something to tell you.” Fleur took a deep breath and then merely uttered two words, two words that would change the lives of her and her husband forever. “I’m preghnant.”

This news took Bill by surprise, and now he had even more on his mind. He was now facing a career change, and now he knew he was going to be a father. He was silent for a lengthy period of time, and this was beginning to worry Fleur.

“Dahling,” she asked him nervously, “are you all right?”

Bill came out of his trance, then gently placed his right hand on his wife’s stomach in wonderment at the prospect of their child that was growing inside there, and wrapped his left arm around her waist.

“I’m great” was his answer as he tenderly and passionately kissed his wife.

They came apart after about ten seconds and just looked into each other’s eyes for a few moments, both of them joyful at the prospect of starting a family together.
“We should tell Mum and the others” Bill said, Fleur nodded in agreement.

“Should I tell zem, or would you like to?” Fleur asked.

“You tell them,” Bill said, “I’m sure that you would do a better job of it than me.”

With that, the now expecting couple took hands and made their way back into the Great Hall to share the good news.

Ginny led Sean to a garden area near the school, the same place where Harry and Ron had gone when they left the Yule Ball nearly three years earlier. She led Sean to a bench in the midst of it and the two of them sat down. The two of them were silent for a while; they both had a lot on their minds. Ginny was wondering what Sean’s intentions were in bringing her away from the ceremony and the people there. Sean was wondering where and how to start, this was the first time he had ever been with a woman like this, and he was ignorant about the whole thing.

After they sat down, Sean broke the ice. “This is a lovely garden,” Sean said, “I have never seen anything like it.”

Ginny’s eyes lit up and she began to speak, “I know, this garden really is nice. It’s a lot better than other places I have seen. But I’m sure that you’ve seen more great places than I have, I mean, you’ve been all over the world. But over here is…” Sean gently put a finger to Ginny’s lips to hush her rambling.

“I am sorry” Sean said, “but I asked to talk with you alone because there is something I need to tell you.” Sean took his finger away from Ginny’s lips and he could see that he had her full attention.

“I killed the head vampire, and now we in the Order have an opportunity to destroy what is left of them. I am going on a mission to do just that, and then I am being relieved as a Knight of the Order. I will remain affiliated with the Order to train Knights and new recruits.”

Ginny paused as he said this; she figured that he wouldn’t be telling her this unless it had something to do with her.

“What does this have to do with me?” she asked.

“I have come to realize” Sean said, “that you have taken a liking to me. And if you have, there are some things you should know about me.” Ginny was slightly nervous at hearing this and could only nod to encourage Sean to continue.

“It all really started sixteen years ago,” Sean began, “when my parents were killed by the man you knew as Rufus Scrimgeour and the Priest, then a Knight of the Order, found me and raised me up as his own.”

Sean then told Ginny an abridged story of his life. He talked about his training and how he traveled the world to become the vampire hunter that he was. He told her about all the places he had been and the missions he had performed. He also told her about when he had found his mother changed into a vampire and had killed her, and then about the next three years of his life before he had met her and her family.

Ginny couldn’t get over the story about Sean’s mother and she was still looking at him with shock across her face and tears in her eyes.

“Now you see,” Sean said, “you don’t want to be with me. I have killed too many, and you would be getting a man who knows nothing of true love and who is an emotional wreck.

Sean finished this, and then looked at the perfect brown eyes that were staring at him. Ginny, even after hearing all of this, still felt the same way romantically about Sean…and she wanted to let him know that. She took a chance and put one of her hands on his leg.

“Sean,” she said, “all that you have told me just now only tells me that you are an even better man than I thought you were. You’ve come back from all of that to become a truly noble, and great man.”
Ginny then knew what she had to say, “Sean, I love you.”

Sean paused at this, his parents and the Sagart had said those words to him in the past, but this was the first time anyone had ever said it to him like this. Ginny could see that Sean wasn’t going to respond on his own, so she added something to it.

“Do you love me?” she asked with her cute British accent and not taking her brown eyes away from Sean’s Prussian blues.

Sean thought about this and then answered, “In my mind I know that I shouldn’t feel for you or want to be with you. But my body cries for you Ginerva.”

Ginny didn’t know how to respond, but she settled for moving in closer to the man she was falling more and more in love with every moment.

“Sean,” she said as she moved her hand from his leg to take his hand. “Everything you say or do only makes me want to be with you more. I know that you have killed, but you have never killed an innocent person. You have had a lot of painful things happen to you, but don’t you think that its time you quit shouldering that burden alone? Let me help you.”

Sean paused and then looked at Ginny, “Ginerva, I want to be with you. I want that more than I can express, I’m just scared that I won’t know what to do…” as Sean said this, Ginny put her hands on Sean’s cheeks and brought his face to look into her eyes.

“I will help you Sean. There won’t be anymore ‘I’ or ‘you’, there will only be us.”

Sean looked into Ginny’s eyes and thought of how perfect they looked to him, especially coupled with her beautiful long red hair. But he also knew that he had to go, the Priest would be expecting him.

“I have to go,” he said to Ginny, “I need to be going with the Priest to prepare for my next assignment.”

“I understand” Ginny said.

“When I am relieved as a Knight,” Sean said, “I will be allowed and encouraged to marry and start a family.” Ginny’s face brightened up as she realized what he was implying. “But I don’t want you to wait for me unless you are absolutely sure this is what you want.”

Ginny looked deep into Sean’s eyes and answered with “I have never been more sure of anything in my entire life Sean. I am devoted to you my brave and handsome Knight.” Ginny then paused and said to Sean “Please, just come back from this last mission alive--come back to me.”

Ginny’s eyes then welled up with tears and she wanted so much to kiss Sean, but remembering that he was still a monk she settled for giving him a big hug, which the Knight returned with a gentle one.

“I need to be getting to the Priest, I need to prepare to leave in the morning” Sean said.

“I know,” Ginny said in a soft voice, “just, please let me hold you for a little while.”

Sean consented to this and held Ginny as she held him, it was a moment that both of them felt was frozen in time and that they would always remember.

After they came apart, Ginny spoke, “you should be going now,” she said.

“Aye” was all Sean said, and he got up to leave, Ginny got up with him and took his outstretched arm.
“I heard about what happened with Regal at the Phoenix base,” Sean began to Ginny, “he must like you.”

Ginny smiled and held onto Sean’s arm as he led her back to Hogwarts.
Chapter 33: Farewells

Sean awoke early the next morning, as was his custom, and took what little things he had brought with him together. He had slept in his battle clothes the night before, and kept those on while he gathered his formal wear. Ginny had told Sean where to find Regal the night before, and Sean had acquired him before going to bed. The Sagart had been given a guest room near Minister Moody that night, and Sean had been given another guest room.

He was now dressed, and after calling Regal over to perch on his shoulder, he went outside to meet the Sagart, he had to ask how they would be getting back to the monastery.

When he made his way out to the common ground, he was surprised to see the Sagart with Minister Moody, Bill, Harry, Ron, and Hermione. He walked over and exchanged greetings with Moody and then asked the Sagart in English, “why are all of them out here?”

The Sagart smiled and answered, “Minister Moody would like to learn more about the Order, so I have agreed to show him around the monastery. He is also our means of getting there. I believe the rest of them came to see you off.”

Sean gave Regal to the Priest, and then came up to Bill and the two of them grabbed shoulders and shook hands the same way they had done at the ceremony before embracing.

Sean spoke first after they came apart, “Where is Fleur?”

A smile came to Bill’s face as he answered, “she is still asleep, she is a bit more tired now with the baby on the way.”

Sean was quick to answer, “Congratulations old friend, I am sure that you will make a great Dad.”

Bill looked at Sean with a serious expression and then said, “if it’s a boy, we want to name him after you. And in any case, we would like for you to be the child’s godfather.”

Sean answered in his usual monotone Irish voice, “it’s the least I can do after you saved my life.”

Bill was confused at this, “when did I save your life?”

“I was at the point of death after that battle,” Sean began, “but before I passed on, I heard you call me…and I came.”

Bill smiled and then he and Sean came together in a masculine embrace.

“I thank you for everything my friend” Bill said to Sean, “and I will always be here to help when needed” he added as they broke the embrace.

Sean turned to face Harry and Hermione. Both of them looked at Sean with meaningful gazes, both reflecting gratitude.

Hermione came up to Sean and kissed his cheek, “we owe you everything Sean,” she said simply “thank you so much.”

Sean nodded and then Ron walked up to him. “I just wanted to say thank you,” Ron said, “for all you’ve done for my family and my best mate. Harry sure is lucky to have had a teacher like you.”

Sean looked at Ron and spoke, “there’s no such thing as luck Ron. We can only make the right decisions and be where we need to…God takes care of the rest.”
Ron smirked and looked at Sean’s crucifix, “Sometimes I forget that you’re a monk.”

Sean smirked and then said; “take care of your sister and family,” as the two of them shook hands. After this, Sean walked over to where Harry was standing. Hermione pushed Ron off to the side a ways so that Harry and Sean could talk al

“I owe you so much Sean,” Harry said, “I wish that you could stay with me all the time…you’ve been like a father to me.”

Sean answered him, “we both have our own lives to live Harry. My path is different from yours, we can only be grateful that they merged at some point. You were my first student, and I doubt that I will ever have one better than you.”

The two of them paused and looked at each other for a while. Harry remembered feeling similarly when he had said goodbye to Lupin at the end of his third year. Another mentor was leaving him, but Harry felt good this time. He knew that this mentor was not leaving in the wake of some controversy, or because he was dead, or because he was a fugitive, he merely had things to do away from where he was.

Sean then spoke to Harry, “In ancient Rome, when someone would achieve a great feat that would merit him a lifetime of honor. The Emperor would tell him ‘A long life, and the good sense to live it.’” Harry held Sean’s gaze as Sean said, “and I repeat this to you Harry, a long life,” Sean gestured with his face toward where Hermione was standing, “and the good sense to live it.”

Harry nodded affirmatively at Sean and the two of them gripped each other’s forearms in a handshake and faced each other, Harry Potter and the Knight of St. George. Sean then walked toward Moody, who was about to apparate himself and the Priest. But they were interrupted by the voice of a young girl running to them.

“Sean!” Ginny called out as she ran to where they were. Sean politely excused himself and ran to meet Ginny. “I wanted to tell you goodbye,” Ginny said, and then she kissed Sean on the cheek.

Sean could see tears welling up in Ginny’s eyes; he lifted his finger and gently brushed them away. After he had done this, he tenderly put his hands on her cheeks and in a very tender yet strong voice said, “Don’t cry Ginerva, I will come back to you. I will wait until you are done with school and I have made a living, but wherever you go, I will come to you.” Ginny was still emotional at this point, and between sobs she spoke to Sean.

“How can you know that? What if on this next assignment you…”

Ginny stopped as she saw Sean bring his hands behind his head. He was wearing his medal and his crucifix around his neck; he reached back and brought the crucifix up over his head. He then turned it so that the side with the red beams was facing him, and gently put it around Ginny’s neck.

“I’ll be back for that,” Sean said pointing to the crucifix. Ginny now knew more than ever that she was in love with Sean, and that this was real and not some fling. She sprung into Sean’s strong arms and he held her in a tight and loving embrace.

“I love you” Ginny said into Sean’s ear.

“I know” Sean answered.

“And I’ll wait for you forever,” Ginny added at the last.

After they came apart, Sean gave one last nod to Ginny and to the others that were there to see him off. He then stepped back to where his Sagart and Minister Moody were standing and took hold of Moody’s arm as Regal hopped onto his shoulder.

Before they could apparate, Bill raised his hand and called out “goodbye Knight.”
Sean looked up, raised his own hand and responded “farewell wizard.”

A few seconds later, the three of them were gone, off to the monastery on the cliffs of Moher in Ireland. Bill, Harry, Hermione, Ron, and Ginny were now left alone on the grounds near Hogwarts, just outside the protected boundaries. Bill immediately left to go be with his wife.

The sun was rising, and it was a very beautiful sight to behold. The four of them felt that they were on the threshold of a new beginning, one that would be glorious. Hermione walked over to Harry and took his hand; Ginny walked over to her brother and gave him a hug. She felt sad to see Sean leave, but hopeful for the future at the same time. Sean had given her his word that he would come back to her, and she now had his crucifix to always remind her of him. The four of them looked at the sunrise for a little longer before Hermione spoke.

“It’s a new day” she said, “and a new world. It would seem that the storm is over.”

Ron spoke at this point, “Yeah. No more adventures, no more looming threats, and probably no more mad antics. What are we to do?”

“It is a new beginning,” Harry said, “and I for one believe that we should all make the best of this new chance. Sean said to me ‘a long life and the good sense to live it,’” as Harry finished this he turned to look into Hermione’s eyes, “and I intend to do just that.”

“That sounds like a good idea for all of us,” Ginny said as she held Sean’s crucifix in her left hand.

Harry then gave Hermione’s hand a squeeze and said, “let’s go.”

With that, he led her back towards the school. Ron put his arm around his sister’s shoulder, she was still handling the iron crucifix around her neck and wondering at all that had happened, and the four of them walked back to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.
Chapter 34: Sendoff of a Knight

It was a fairly warm night as Hungarian nights go. It was September and the air was progressively cooler. There was a special moon shining amongst the stars and against the backdrop of the dark blue sky. Deep in rural Hungary, far from any settlements, the remnants of an ancient stone structure, an old shrine thought by the locals to be cursed, stood silently in the night.

A few minutes after the last of the sunlight was gone, several figures began to make their way to the shrine. They all moved quickly, but very drudgingly at the same time, as though they were sick.

As the night progressed, more and more figures made their way into the ruin. They dressed in dark cloaks and all had pale skin. Some of them carried torches, many of them came armed with swords and spears, all of them looked around nervously, as though they were afraid they were being watched.

Eventually a group of a little more than two hundred had gathered amongst the stones. They were not many, but they represented the remnants of the vampire race. All of them had felt when the head vampire, their leader, had died, and all of them knew that the only way to get their health restored was to be at the shrine when the new head vampire was named and coronated.

Little did the vampires know that a ways away, they were indeed being watched, and by a group of men who had been trained to kill them and had been waiting there for some time.

Sean O’Sullivan and Daniel Flanagan knelt side by side about one hundred yards from where the vampires were gathering. Sean was looking ahead and watching the gathering. He had his two swords strapped to his back and his knives on his chest, he wouldn’t need his crossbow or arrows for this one, and Regal perched on his shoulder.

Daniel was keeping a close eye on the gathering through a telescope he held in his right hand. In his left hand, he held the handle of a double-bladed glaive, which rested across his back. One end of the weapon had a straight tip, like a spear, the other end had a more jagged blade, almost like an axe, which had a farther reaching tip and then dipped and slanted to the middle part of the weapon.

Sean was always patient, but for this mission he was on edge. He not only had the same jitters he always had before he went into battle, but he also had the knowledge that this would be his final battle. For the past two weeks, in between his coordinating the battle that was about to take place, he had often thought about what it would be like not being a Knight—and the prospect often made him concerned.

At this point, he began to feel for his crucifix so that he could fidget with it as he often did when he felt this way. But when he felt and found nothing, he began to think back to why it wasn’t there. He remembered standing outside Hogwarts and talking to Ginerva Weasley. He remembered her tear-stained face and how much he wished he could see her happy. And he remembered her worry at never seeing him again.

Then he remembered putting his crucifix around her neck and telling her that he would return for it. “Please,” she had said to him, “just come back from this last mission alive—come back to me.” In that instant, he realized that outside of the Order he had a new purpose, and it’s name was Ginerva Molly Weasley.

Sean came back to focusing on the moment at hand and spoke to Daniel. “How many?” he asked him.

“I count about two hundred,” Daniel answered, “I could be off due to the light, but that looks pretty accurate. In any case, there can’t be more than two hundred and fifty of them in there.”
It only took Sean a moment to compute what this meant. “And there's fifty of us,” he said, “so at most that's nine each.”

Daniel kept watching the gathering through his telescope, paying close attention to the crowd to see when one or two of them would distinguish themselves and stand out from the rest. He could tell that Sean was thinking though because of the silence that was around him. He looked up for a moment to see that Sean was indeed in thought, and he thought he knew why.

“Sean,” Daniel began, “if you feel that there are too many of them, we can wait for another time…”

“There won’t be another opportunity like this,” Sean interrupted, “we have to do this. And besides, I’m sure that the fifty of us can take these crippled vampires. Our skills, coupled with the element of surprise, should give us all the advantage we will need.”

“Well,” Daniel began, “I didn’t see any of them standing out just yet, but it looks like all of them are there. And if you don’t mind my asking,” Daniel interjected, “why the long pause earlier?”

Sean answered almost immediately after Daniel finished, but Sean had a tone of wistfulness, as though he were remembering something with a great fondness.

“I was just thinking,” Sean said, “about the future and the past. But now, we need to focus on the present.”

Daniel merely nodded in response, and then the two of them walked a short distance back to where the other forty-eight Knights awaited them. The Knights were all dressed in battle gear, with long pants that didn’t restrict their movement and cloaks for the cold, and came from all parts of the world. Some were from Europe, others Asia, and a few even from Israel and the rest of the Middle East. All but ten of the Knights assembled were armed with stabbing weapons, the other ten were archers armed with bows or crossbows. They were all waiting for orders from Sean.

In the beginning, the ones who started the Order of St. George realized the necessity of having one common language among the Knights. And since the Order had originated in England, the language was English.

“Okay,” Sean began to the assembled group in English, “all the remaining vampires have assembled inside the shrine, it’s time to move out.”

He looked over the group and then pointed to the ten archers who were grouped together and had been counting out their arrows and making sure their bowstrings were good and taut.

“Archers, you know your position. Since Takaguri is the best marksman,” he said gesturing to a Japanese Knight in the group who held a crossbow with a telescopic sight, “he fires the first shot. Prepare for the shot once you get in position, and Samir,” he said pointing to an Arab Knight, “you watch for my signal and give Takaguri the okay.” The archers all nodded in understanding after Sean finished this statement.

“The rest of you will be coming with Daniel and myself. We will be huddling in the cover of the trees over there,” he said pointing to a clump of trees, “and will charge the shrine from the right side after Takaguri fires his shot. Archers, after Takaguri takes his shot, hold your fire until you see any vampires trying to escape during the battle. Ground fighters, you do not leave the shrine until the battle is done, I will not have anyone killed by friendly fire. Understand.”

The entire group nodded, Sean gave a smile to this and then dropped to his knees. The other men did the same, for it was custom in the Order to always pray before a battle. Sean then spoke aloud as the other’s knelt and listened.

“Our dear Father in Heaven,” he began, “we are gathered here on this ground to carry out the sacred work with which we have been charged. We know that it is thy work, and that thou art with us to the end. We only ask for the strength to do what thou wouldst have us do, and to be given the power to defend thy children who remain loyal to thee against the demons that inhabit this Earth. We are thy loyal subjects and surrender ourselves to thee and thy mercy. In the sacred name of thy son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.”
The other Knights then chanted amen, followed by Sean and the rest of them making the sign of the cross and then rising to their feet. Sean took one last good look at the group and spoke his final instructions to the group as a whole.

“All of you know your assignments, I expect to see all of you in the shrine once this is over. Now go, and God go with you.” Sean then performed the customary Order salute, which the other Knights returned and said in unison with them “for God, Truth, and Justice,” and then they dispersed.

The archers left ahead of the others, for they had to spread out across the shrine. Their dark clothes enabled them to blend in with the darkness, and they were able to take their positions unnoticed. Takaguri immediately settled himself onto the ground against a nearby rock, and brought up his loaded crossbow so that he was looking through the sight.

Meanwhile, inside the shrine, the vampires had begun to start the ceremony. One figure made his way to the front of the crowd and began to chant a series of incantations in the vampire language. After the incantations, he began to speak more formally. All of the Knights were now close enough to hear this and recognized what the vampire was saying.

“Brothers and sisters,” he said with a voice that trembled from weakness, “we are gathered here to restore our strength and renew the power of our race. Our father is gone, but we will continue.” The vampire then looked into the crowd and called for one of those assembled there by name. “Mashala!” the vampire called out, “step forward.”

By this time, Sean and Daniel had assembled with the group of Knights in the trees Sean had pointed out earlier. Sean was watching the ceremony through Daniel’s telescope and could hear the incantations, but he knew that the time had not yet come. Regal waited patiently on Sean’s shoulder and stared forward with his sharp and vigilant eyes. Daniel and the other Knights waited with Sean, some were becoming restless and wanted to get the whole thing over with, but the majority of them merely patiently waited for their commander to give the order. The ceremony continued.

“Malasha,” you have been asked to take upon yourself the honor of reigning over our race for all eternity—do you accept?”

The vampire known as Malasha stood resolutely before the one who was obviously in charge of the ceremony and answered, “Yes.”

The vampire in charge then held out a silver goblet, filled to the brim with a substance the Knights were sure was blood.

“This is the blood of Raiganzi, the father. This, coupled with the power of the moon of the changing, will give you all of his power and after you mix your blood with each of ours, we will all be restored to full power and free to live and feed again.” There was a roar of approval from all the vampires assembled at the end of these words. Then, Malasha took the goblet and drained it.

Immediately, his body collapsed to the ground and he began to act as though he were having some sort of seizure. His body twitched and rose involuntarily at the new rush of power that he felt going through his body. He let out a loud scream and then rolled over onto his stomach and rose to his knees after a few minutes, breathing heavily as he did. He then stood up and smiled an evil smile, first at the one who had been in charge, and then at the assembled mass, who eagerly awaited their turn to mix his blood with theirs and be made whole.

Sean was watching all of this with a sense of wonder and curiosity. He never completely understood how Raiganzi was able to change himself back at the beginning and was hoping to find that out here, but he realized that he probably would never know. After he saw Malasha rise to his feet, he knew that the time had come. He gave Daniel his telescope, which he quickly put away, and then Sean brought his arm up so that it went across his chest. His falcon Regal was trained to know that when his master brought his arm up like this, that he needed to perch there, and he did so. Sean then said those two words that he had said so many times before but never for the reason he was doing now, “Regal, imigh” and cast the bird off.

If he didn’t have a letter tied around his leg, Regal was trained to fly away for a while and then return to the point where his master had sent him off. But he flew out far enough to where he was noticed by Malasha and the other vampires, the
Falcon’s cry also helped this, and they looked up to see the figure flying away, then they heard the sound of a crossbow firing.

Takaguri had aimed his weapon at Malasha the instant that he had come to the front and accepted the charge of head vampire. His aim was always at his heart, and when Malasha stood up, Takaguri had a perfect shot. At the time when all of the vampires looked up to see Regal, Samir looked up and then simply told Takaguri, “Fire” and he did so.

The vampires looked down to see Malasha with a silver arrow through his heart and falling to the ground dead. The next thing they heard was a loud yell from Sean, followed by the other Knights doing the same, from the nearby trees as Sean stood up and ran to the shrine with his swords drawn and thirty-nine yelling Knights behind him.

The vampires were in a state of panic as they heard the shouts from the charging Knights. The vampire who had been conducting the ceremony then shouted, “we must leave now, and live to fight another day!”

Even being crippled, the vampires knew that they could outrun the Knights long enough to escape. But as they exited the shrine, several arrows from every possible exit route let them know that they were not getting out that way. As soon as one of them would step through the opening between two of the stones, an arrow from one of the archers would strike them through the heart. The remaining vampires saw that the group of ground Knights were few and decided to stay and take their chances.

Sean was the first to enter the shrine. The first he did was perform a jumping turnaround kick on a vampire in front of him and then move to the central part of the shrine to allow the other Knights to file in. The other Knights made sure everyone was in and then began their work of destruction, careful to stay away from the other sides of the shrine but attempting to force vampires out so that the archers would pick them off.

Sean began decapitating and stabbing vampires with a kind of righteous fury that had never been seen before. Some of the vampires would try to fight him with their swords or spears, but they were no match for the man who had killed the head vampire.

Daniel was also a great warrior, and he showed his expertise with the glaive he was carrying. He would use the thick blade to parry swords or spears, then quickly flip it around and use the pointed side to thrust his enemy through the heart. At one point, he fought off four vampires simultaneously with both sides of his glaive. He eventually finished them off by decapitating some with the thick blade and thrusting the rest through with the spear tip.

The screams of vampires dying could be heard everywhere in the immediate area as they met their fate by blades or arrows. The tide was turning in the favor of the Knights as Daniel ran his glaive through another vampire. He was then pushed to the ground by another one who stood over him with a spear, ready to strike. Sean noticed this from across the way, and threw the sword in his left hand at the vampire about to kill his friend.

Sean’s sword struck the demon in the abdomen, not killing him, but giving Daniel time enough to get to his feet and run his glaive through the demon’s heart. Daniel gave a nod to Sean, who returned it and drew the knife on his left side. Sean then used the knife to deflect an attempted sword attack by one of the vampires, and then ran him through with his sword.

As the fighting continued, one particular vampire made eye contact with Sean. The two of them looked at each other, and then Sean raised his left hand and pointed the tip of his knife at the vampire, calling him over. The vampire barred its fangs and gave a sort of hiss as it ran at Sean with a spear. Sean easily moved out of the way when the vampire thrust its spear at him, he then brought his knife down, cutting the spear in half, and brought his sword around, cutting the vampire’s head off.

After the kill, Sean noticed that things were suddenly very quiet. He looked around and could see several corpses dressed in black cloaks, and some Knights walking around and stabbing wounded vampires through the heart, ensuring their deaths. Since the Knights had all been wearing battle gear, specifically their tank tops and pants, they had dropped their cloaks when they had started fighting, he was looking for corpses with uncovered arms. But before he saw any dead Knights, he could see that the battle was over. The whole thing had only taken about twenty minutes, and he called for the archers to enter the shrine and then called out for all the Knights to gather around him.
After about a minute, the Knights gathered around Sean. He then began counting the number of men before him. “One…two…three” he was dreading at the thought of how many more names would be on the plaque in the trophy room and how he would live with himself knowing that he was the one who led them there. “Twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine…” he continued counting wondering how many more survived. After a few more seconds he finished counting, “forty-seven, forty-eight, forty-nine.”

He breathed a sigh of relief and thanked God for sparing all of them, and then he spoke to the men. “We have been very fortunate today brothers. We must all thank God for sparing us.” Sean then dropped to his knees and the other Knights followed suit. No one spoke aloud this time, for they all said private prayers.

After a few minutes, they were all back on their feet. “We still have work to do,” Sean began, “I want you men,” he pointed to a group of large muscular men who had been fighting with large weapons similar to sledge hammers, just with thicker handles, much bigger and thicker sledges, and with pointed ends on the sledges to use for stabbing, “to start tearing down this shrine. Remember to pour the holy water onto the remnants after you’ve toppled it. The rest of you start piling the carcasses, and don’t forget to count them to be sure we got them all.”

After all of them had saluted Sean, the large men with the hammers left to begin destroying the shrine and the other Knights left to begin the task of piling the carcasses of the dead vampires. Sean then turned to Daniel, who walked up and handed Sean the sword he had thrown earlier. This was coupled with a silent “thank you” from Daniel, and then Sean gave an order. “Go back into the trees and get the bag with the napalm,” Sean instructed Daniel.

“Yes sir,” Daniel answered, and then he left to carry out the order. Sean then reached into the pocket of his pants, took out a hand mirror, and made his way to outside of the shrine, taking one of the torches with him for light.

After he was out a ways, he found a place to set the torch and held the mirror up to his face. “Michael O’Connell” Sean said into the mirror. Sean kept staring at the mirror, and saw his own reflection turn into the image of his Sagart, who was in front of the full sized mirror he had received from Minister Moody a few days earlier.

“Sean my son,” the Priest said in Irish Gaelic as he saw the image reflected in his mirror, “I am very glad to hear from you.” The Sagart had a look on his face that suggested anticipation, but it was at the same time serious and investigative. “How did it go?” he asked.

“They’re all dead,” Sean answered in Irish Gaelic, “the men are doing a final count and destroying the shrine as we speak.”

“That is wonderful news,” the Priest said, “I am very pleased with you.” The Priest smiled the kind of smile that a father does when they are pleased with a son, and Sean smiled back. “I will be expecting you back here for purification and to then return your weapons,” the Sagart added.

“I’ll be there,” Sean answered, this marked the two of them ending their conversation.

Sean put the mirror back into his pocket. He then said “Regal, tar” and his beloved falcon swooped down and perched on his shoulder, nipping affectionately at Sean’s ear and then his finger as Sean stroked his bird. He began walking back to what was left of the shrine. From the light of the torches around it, he could see a pile of carcasses in the middle of the ruins, and he could see that a lot of the ruin had been toppled already.

He personally found the pile of carcasses and the napalm. After Daniel confirmed with him that they had killed all the vampires and all the bodies were accounted for, Sean threw the bag onto the pile and watched the flames consume the last of the demonic race.

He sighed inwardly as he watched the flames and took in the sight of the last battle between Knights and vampires. “It’s all over,” he said to himself. He began thinking about what his future would hold. He knew that he would be honorably relieved from the Order after he was done with purification, and he knew that he would need to go back to Mullingar to make peace with his past. But he also saw Ginny in his future, for he had promised to come back to her—and he always
kept his promises.

He looked up at the sky. He found the pattern of stars he had chosen to designate his father, the one he had lost to Raiganzi those many years ago, and he hoped his mother as well, and spoke. “Well Dad,” he sighed after he said this, “It’s all over now, I hope that I’ve made you proud.” He then paused for a moment and then prayed to God to guide him for this next part of his life.

About four days after the battle, Sean found himself in the building of the Sagart. He had been given some civilian clothing, and stood dressed in a pair of hiking boots, some sox, a pair of dark blue jeans, a black t-shirt, and a denim jacket. He was looking at the trophy cases on either side of him. He stopped to look particularly at a few new additions.

There was a large framed picture that had been taken a few nights before of him and the rest of the vampire hunters in their battle clothes and with their weapons. He smiled as he found Daniel and his other comrades in the picture and sighed in relief that they were all okay.

Earlier that day, each of the vampire hunters had come into the Sagart’s office to present their weapons and receive their civilian clothing and a sum of money that they had been given to help them start their new lives. Each of them was allowed to take their horse to wherever they chose to go. Sean was especially given his horse because there was no way Cuchulainn would come back without his master. He and the other Knights were also given their falcons so that they could keep in touch with the monastery, especially if their services were required again.

Sean then looked at another new addition to the case. He saw a portrait of himself with his swords drawn and all of his usual weapons visible. Next to this was a flesh-colored statue with Sean’s face. The figure had Sean’s old armor and weapons, with a replica crucifix, and stood up straight and tall. The inscription below it read, “Sean O’Sullivan, our greatest vampire hunter.” The katana he had used to kill Raiganzi, and the ring he had taken from Raiganzi’s finger, were displayed in another part of the trophy case, with some of the papers, swords, and other souvenirs.

Sean had packed all his personal belongings and had mounted his duffel bag onto Cuchulainn. He and Regal were waiting in the stable. Sean wanted to say goodbye to the man who had taken his father’s place, he made his way upstairs, knocked on the Sagart’s door, and entered after he told him to come in. The Sagart smiled a big smile as Sean entered.

“I thought that I would see you again my son,” the Sagart greeted him in Irish Gaelic.

“i just came to say goodbye—” Sean began, “and I especially wanted to say thank you so much for all that you have done for me.”

Tears of gratitude began to force their way onto Sean’s face. The Sagart had been sitting behind his desk, but rose and walked over to the young man who had been like a son to him. The two of them embraced and held each other tight, as if they would never let go. The Sagart began to shed tears as well, and inwardly poured out his soul to God in prayer that the young man before him would be okay.

After about a minute, the two of them came apart. Sean stepped back to face his Sagart. “I want you to know,” he said in Irish Gaelic, “that as far as I’m concerned you are my father.”

The tears continued to roll down the old man’s cheeks as he answered, “and you will always be my son—the son I never had.” The two of them stared at each other a while longer before the Sagart kissed Sean on the forehead and then told him, “Godspeed Sean.”

Sean then performed his customary bow and salute, then rose to his feet and then with a great sincerity said, “farewell Priest.” Sean then turned and walked out of the Sagart’s chambers.

A few minutes later, Sean arrived at the stables to find his horse and falcon loyally awaiting their master. He stopped in front of the horse. “Well old friend,” Sean said to the horse in Irish Gaelic, “it’s time for another adventure. Take me there.” He then mounted Cuchulainn, and called out “Regal, tar!” prompting Regal to perch on Sean’s shoulder. Sean
gently urged his horse forward to the open front gate of the monastery, wondering why the grounds looked so deserted. In a moment, he would be shown his answer.

He paused for a moment to look at the place that had been his home for so long, and he remembered all that it had meant to him. It was then that he saw the Priest and the Knights who were at the monastery, all standing along the parapets and the top of the wall. All of them had come to get one last look at the legendary vampire hunter, the one who had his own exhibit in the Order trophy case.

He smiled at the monastery and all those assembled there. He then thumped his chest twice, raised his arm into the air, and yelled “For God, truth, and justice, Erin go Braugh!” This was responded to by all those on the wall doing the same and repeating “Erin go Braugh!” several times.

Sean then performed the Order salute, which was also returned, brought his right palm up to the air in a farewell gesture, and then turned his horse around and was off. The Priest was emotional as he watched the young who he had raised as a son ride off to an unsure future. He kept his composure, and he and the other Knights watched Sean until he disappeared over the horizon.

The Priest then turned to the Knights, “the work is not over,” he said, “we must all continue on until it is accomplished. Everyone back to your posts.” The Knights nodded and dispersed, the Priest returned to his chambers and went back to wo
Chapter 35: New Beginning

“Bloody hell,” Ron Weasley said as he, Harry, Neville, and Richard Coote, stood waiting for Demelza, Hermione, Luna, and Ginny in the Gryffindor Common Room. The students had already been treated to a few fireworks displays and some feasts since the opening ceremony. On this night the first of the promised dances that McGonagall had promised for the coming year was to be held. It was being called the Victory Ball, and the four of them had all gotten dates to attend it.

The four boys were all wearing their dress robes and looking very presentable and distinguished, as distinguished as a group of eighteen year olds can look, and each had a corsage for their date. In typical male fashion, their dress robes were pretty much the same, but each of them was wearing something unique as well. Ron had a lily, Demelza’s favorite flower, pinned over the left side of his chest. Richard wore a silver belt buckle that bore his family crest, displayed proudly and big enough for any who were looking to see, and Neville wore a unicorn button Luna had given him earlier.

Harry had decided to break with tradition a little and was dressed in a long sleeved white dress shirt, dark dress slacks, and a vest with the Gryffindor house colors. He was also wearing a few unique accessories that he had gained in the past.

During dinner the first day of the term, Harry was announced as head boy. With this he was given a badge, similar to a prefects badge, and tonight he wore it on the left side of his vest. He also wore his medal around his neck, and it rested just under his chest. Throughout the whole time that he, Ron, and Richard had been waiting in the common room, Ron, Neville, and Richard had been eyeing Harry’s medal and asking to touch it and feel the engravings.

At the point they were now, they were all growing slightly impatient, except for Harry, who had learned the art of extreme patience from his time with Sean. Harry decided to help the wait go by faster and began to speak.

“Did I ever tell you about the time Sean broke my nose when he was training me?” Harry asked out loud. Ron and Richard’s interest peaked at this as they shook their heads. Harry ended up entertaining them with stories about his time at the monastery in Ireland for another fifteen minutes.

Meanwhile, up in the girl’s dormitory, Ginny, Luna, who had come by early to help her friends prepare, and Demelza, who were all dressed and ready, were trying in vain to convince Hermione that she looked fine.

“For the last time,” Demelza said with an air of impatience, “you look wonderful. Harry would have to be blind, and a vegetable not to notice that.”

Hermione gave a sigh and then stood on her feet to look at herself in the mirror. She had been spending a lot of time getting ready; she wanted to look perfect for her Harry. Her hair was styled very elegantly, just as it had been when she went to the Yule Ball almost four years ago, and she wore a beautiful light blue sleeveless dress. It hugged the curves of her mature and fully developed body, and the girls were sure that Harry would be drooling when he finally saw her.

The other girls were dressed nicely as well. Ginny wore a modest silk dress, which hugged her toned and athletic body very nicely. And also wore the iron crucifix Sean had given her around her neck, constantly averting her eyes to it and hoping that wherever he was, all was well. Due to her father’s financial status, Luna was able to have a very elegant light purple dress, and it looked great on her. Demelza wore a pink goblin-made dress, which also accentuated her athletic, curvaceous, and fully developed body. She also wore a sash Ron had given her, which she had only accepted after he promised it wasn’t something he had picked up at the shop.

The four of them had taken turns doing each other’s hair and had had a lot of fun getting dolled up for the occasion. McGonagall had promised festivities this year at Hogwarts, and now the four of them would be going to the first formal Ball of the year with their dates.
Hermione stood and looked in the mirror. Remembering when she had first come to Hogwarts and been the bushy haired, almost tomboyish, little girl that she was, it amazed her to see the beautiful young woman staring back at her. She looked herself up and down, trying to find any error in her appearance or in what she was wearing. After about five minutes of scrutinizing, and just taking in, her appearance, she conceded.

“Oh my gosh,” she said almost dumbfounded, “I look…”

“You look beautiful,” Ginny interjected, “like something out of Harry’s wildest dreams.” Ginny couldn’t have known, but before the Battle of Hogwarts, Harry’s “wildest dreams” had consisted of things like deaths of loved ones. But since then, he had been dreaming more and more of the wonderful new future that awaited him. And his “wildest dreams” now consisted of he and Hermione doing “stuff” together that resulted in waking up hot and sweaty.

“Are we ready now?” Luna asked, “I think that we have kept the boys waiting long enough.” The others nodded, and then made their way down the stairs to the common room.

“…And that’s when he gave me this” Harry said as he showed his friends the brand on his chest. Harry had just finished telling them about how he had completed his training with Sean. The three of them cringed imagining the pain that it had caused. Harry smirked as he saw their reactions, which included the three of them simultaneously uttering “bloody hell.”

Harry then buttoned his shirt back up and stayed quiet as he waited for them to ask him something or to urge him on. Richard was about to ask Harry about how much it hurt when the three of them heard footsteps coming down the stairs.

The four of them all got a little jittery and decided to stand, almost as if at attention, to receive the girls they would be escorting. Demelza came down first, and Ron, who had just finished touching up his hair a little, walked forward to receive her. “You look wonderful!” Ron managed to force out, it was difficult for him to talk with his mouth wide open gawking at the girl in front of him.

Demelza smiled and raised her index under Ron’s chin to close his mouth. “Thank you very much Ronald,” she answered. Ron shook his head a little to regain his composure, and then kissed Demelza’s hand that she had offered to him, put the corsage on her, and then offered her his arm, which she took.

Next came Luna, and Neville, always a little nervous, was uncharacteristically well composed as he approached her. “You look very good tonight,” he said as he kissed Luna’s extended hand.

Luna blushed, “thank you Neville, you look nice as well. And thanks for wearing the button I gave you.” Neville smiled, and then put the corsage around Luna and offered her his arm.

The next one down was Ginny, and Richard, who was quite the gentlemen despite being beater for the Quidditch Team, approached and greeted her. “Hello mate,” he said, as he took her extended hand and kissed it. “You are looking very nice tonight, especially considering…” Richard said as he glanced at the crucifix around Ginny’s neck.

Ginny blushed slightly at the thought of Sean, and then kissed Richard on the cheek. “Thanks so much for taking me to the Ball,” Ginny said sincerely to her teammate and friend.

“No problem,” Richard answered, “we Cootes are gentlemen. And besides, what are friends for?”

Ginny smiled at this and continued to do so as Richard placed the corsage around her wrist. Ginny then took Richard’s extended arm. Richard had asked Ginny to the Ball after Harry and Hermione had explained the situation with Sean to him. Richard had agreed to take her out as a friend, without any thoughts of romantic involvement, and make sure she had a good time.

Hermione came down last, wearing her beautiful dress and taking her time as she made her way down the stairs. Ron and Richard had been greeting their own dates and didn’t notice right off, but Harry had been waiting vigilantly, and what he
saw made him almost pinch himself to make sure he wasn’t dreaming.

A big smile came across Hermione’s face when she saw Harry standing there gaping at her. Harry had never seen anything so beautiful in his entire life. He thought that Hermione was beautiful the way she normally looked, but seeing her after she made an effort to look that way, made him almost pass out. She came walking to where he stood, it was a struggle for her to walk slowly since she wanted to run up and hug and kiss Harry senseless every time she saw him. But she kept a formal air about her and eventually arrived in front of the young man she loved.

They just stood and stared at each other for a few moments, each one of them wanting to save the moment in their memory forever. Ron, Richard, Neville, Demelza, Luna, and Ginny had finished their hellos at this point and looked to see their two friends staring at each other. They could tell that the two of them would want to be alone for a moment, so they excused themselves and said they would be waiting outside the portrait.

After what seemed like an eternity, Harry spoke to Hermione. “You look—” Harry paused as he tried to search for the right words to say to describe the vision in front of him. After he couldn’t think of anything to say, he decided to be honest. “I can’t think of any words to describe how great you look.”

Hermione smiled an even bigger smile and looked deep into Harry’s eyes. “That’s the nicest thing you could have said to me,” she answered. Harry just stood gaping for a few more moments before putting the corsage on her. He then backed up a couple of steps, earning a questioning look from Hermione.

“I just want to get the full view of how you look right now,” Harry said to her, “because you look perfect.”

Hermione smiled, “That was my intention the entire time Harry” she said almost giggling.

Harry smiled, “If you had wanted to look perfect,” he began, “than why did it take you so long to get ready?”

Hermione could no longer contain herself, she began walking to Harry, slowly but determined. Harry just stood frozen; he didn’t want to move. She came up to him, wrapped her arms around him, and leaned onto his toned and muscular torso, moving his medal to the side as she did so. She then looked up as if to speak. But actions spoke louder than words as the two of them came together for a kiss. After about ten seconds, they came apart.

“Well Sir Harry,” Hermione began, “you may escort me to the ball.” She then offered him her hand, which he took and kissed

He then offered her his arm and spoke in a formal sounding voice, “Lady Hermione.” Hermione giggled at Harry’s show of bravado and took his arm and he led her out of the common room.

They could hear the Fat Lady complimenting their friends on how nice they looked and how she was wondering if Harry and Hermione looked as nice. She was soon shown her answer as the two of them exited and then turned to say hello.

The Fat Lady gasped as she saw them. “My goodness,” she said, “you two look like royalty right now.” The two of them smirked at this. “Miss Granger, you look so beautiful in that dress, and such a lovely young lady.” The Fat Lady then turned her gaze to Harry. “And you—you look so grown up, but it is different seeing you with your hair like that.” Harry’s hair was still in the crew cut style the Priest had given him back at the monastery.

“Well,” Hermione said as she ran her hand through his hair, “I like his hair like that, and Harry is a Knight now.” Harry was quick to add, “only honorary.”

The Fat Lady then smiled again as she saw the medal around Harry’s neck. “And I see that you are wearing your medal,” she began. “We were all so proud to see you and the others up there receiving the medal. And I knew you long before you were a hero.”

Harry smiled, but he knew that they had to get going or they would miss the start of the event. “We have to go,” Harry said politely. “We will see you later tonight.” With that, they waved and were gone down the stairs.
Their walk to the Great Hall was very jubilant; there was a lot of that going around after Voldemort’s demise. The eight of them engaged in vibrant conversation about their first classes in school and about their hopes for the coming year and after school. Harry still wanted to become an Auror, and Hermione still wanted to be a Healer.

“It would be great,” Harry said, “if I ever get hurt on an assignment, I won’t have to go to the hospital, I’ll just have to come home.”

“You plan on living in a hospital?” Richard interjected, gaining some laughs from the others.

Harry gave a light chuckle, “No, even better,” he then looked at the young woman next to him, “I’ll have a live-in Healer.”

Hermione blushed at this and the other six instinctively turned their heads as Harry and Hermione briefly kissed. After a little while, they arrived at the Great Hall and saw that most of the students had already arrived. They moved towards the front of the crowd, hardly able to contain their excitement for the Ball to start. They had no problem getting through, all Harry had to do was say “excuse us” and it was if Moses had parted the Red Sea.

Hermione glanced at Harry and the shining medal he was wearing around his neck. “I didn’t know that you would be wearing your medal,” she said.

Harry blushed slightly as he answered, “I wasn’t planning on it, but McGonagall asked me to wear it as part of my formal attire this year. She said that it would help boost morale around the school and lend to the joy of the festivities.”

The group of friends made small talk for a little while, when McGonagall came in to address them. The Great Hall had been arranged for the ball, with a table with drinks and other refreshments, several round tables where people could sit and chat, a fairly large open space for dancing, and behind that a stage for the musicians. The students were all on their feet and talking amongst each other. After a while, all the students had separated into groups of friends.

The students quieted down as McGonagall took the stage and began to speak. “Welcome all to this wonderful occasion. This will be the first of many such occasions this year to celebrate the restoration of peace and order to our world.” She paused while the students applauded and then continued. “Before we begin, I would like to issue a few reminders. All students are to remain either inside the Great Hall, or out in the gardens before returning to your dormitories. And, recent events have occurred, which Minister Moody believes should be announced here at the school.”

The students remained silent and expecting as McGonagall continued. “In the spirit of the newly reformed alliance between the magical world and the Order of St. George.” Ginny tensed slightly at the mention of the Order to which Sean belonged. “Minister Moody wishes me to announce that the Knights of the Order have scored a great victory in their cause. The vampire threat, which you may remember former Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour was found to be the cause of, has been made extinct.”

There were several gasps from the assembled students. Ginny was silent, but there were a myriad of thoughts running through her head. “Did he survive?” was the chief one among them, but she remained optimistic and began to think about what would happen if he had survived. “He will be relieved from the Order,” she thought to herself, “and then he will go into the world to seek his fortune--and then.” Ginny stopped at this and remembered what he had said. “I will come back to you. I will wait until you are done with school and I have made a living, but wherever you go, I will come to you.”

Ginny then started fingering the iron crucifix that hung around her neck and uttered a silent prayer to God that Sean was okay. Her fears were put to rest as McGonagall continued.

“Minister Moody is also pleased to announce that no Knights were killed in the mission that destroyed the vampires.” There was applause from the students, and a huge sigh of relief from Ginny. A smile crept its way to her face as she began to imagine Sean coming and finding her later.

“One last thing before we begin.” McGonagall continued after the applause died down. “We should remember that many
gave their lives for the cause that we are fortunate enough to see fulfilled. I would like to call for a moment of silence in remembrance of them and their sacrifices.” The students all complied with this request and silently honored those who gave their lives, and contemplated all that they had in their own.”

“I will also like to mention,” McGonagall said after the moment was over, “that we have, as you all know, one of the famous Heroes of Hogwarts here.” Hermione turned and smiled at Harry, who smiled back. “And I would like to ask him, Harry Potter, if he and the young woman he is with, would favor us by having the first dance of the evening.” At Hermione’s urging, Harry nodded in response and McGonagall continued. “Let the Ball begin,” she said, “everyone is free to occupy the floor after the first dance is concluded.”

With this, Harry led Hermione onto the dance floor. It was already common knowledge to the school that Harry and Hermione were, all who knew them thought “finally”, seeing each other, and all those in attendance watched the truly wonderful event unfolding before them. Harry took Hermione’s waist and the two of them waited for the music to start.

The band began to play a slow, beautiful, and emotional piece for the two of them to dance to. Harry led Hermione slowly and carefully around the dance floor to the tune and beat of the music. The two of them just stared at each other; so happy that everything was finally working out and that they had come together. They both fought back the instinct to talk, because they didn’t want to ruin or lessen this perfect moment that they were having.

Many of the students and faculty also happily watched them. Hagrid had to choke back tears as he watched the two students he had always thought would be perfect for each other, dance happily to the beautiful music. Headmistress McGonagall watched them with similar feelings as well. Nymphadora Tonks, their head of house, could not contain her tears of joy as she fingered the engagement ring Lupin had given her that was now around her left ring finger. Harry and Hermione were so perfect for each other, and now they were free to act on that without fear.

Ginny was watching her friends and wishing that Sean was at the Ball. She wondered what he was doing right now, and if he’d already been relieved from the Order. She briefly entertained the fantasy that any moment now, he would come walking in dressed in his formal clothes and sweep her off her feet. But she knew that she would have to wait to see him again. She sighed and began to weep softly, prompting Richard to hand her his handkerchief.

“Are you crying over them,” Richard politely asked pointing to the dancing couple, “or about him,” he added pointing to the crucifix hanging around Ginny’s neck.

After Ginny had regained her composure, she spoke to Richard. “I’m sorry,” she started, “I know that it isn’t right of me to agree to be your date and then spend the whole crying about another man.”

Richard put a hand on Ginny’s shoulder; “I understand completely,” he said, “Harry and Hermione told me about Sean and everything that happened between you two.” Richard made sure that Ginny was facing him so she could see the sincerity in what he said next. “I wanted to take you here so that even though you can’t be with the one you love. You can have a good time with your friends.”

“Thanks” Ginny said to Richard as she handed him back his handkerchief. “It’s good to know that I have so many good friends.” Richard nodded at this and politely kissed Ginny’s hand.

Nearby, Ron and Demelza watched their friends dancing. “They look so perfect together,” Demelza said with a wistful tone. Ron didn’t know how to respond to that, his first impulse would have been to roll his eyes, but now he felt a warm feeling in his body. He looked at Demelza, who looked beautiful in her dress and after her friends had been dolling her up.

“They do look good together,” Ron admitted, “and they always have.”

“Sometimes,” Demelza said, “I forget that the three of you have been friends since the train ride your first year.”

“Yeah,” Ron said as he turned to face Katie, “but so much has happened since then that it is strange to think about.” Ron thought in his mind at some of the things that had had happened since that fateful train ride six years ago. He thought
about the adventures the three of them had had, with the Sorcerers Stone, the Chamber of Secrets, Harry’s Godfather, the Tri-Wizard Tournament and Voldemort’s return, the episode with Deloris Umbridge and the Prophecy Hall, and the first battle at Hogwarts and Dumbledore being killed.

He also remembered the good times that he and his friends had had. He remembered telling Harry about the magical world during their first year of school, him and Harry finding the Basilisk, Lupin’s Defense Against the Dark Arts classes and meeting Sirius, helping Harry during the Tournament, him and Harry playing Quidditch together, Christmas at the Burrow, the time that he ate the love chocolates Harry had been given, when Harry had come back from the monastery with his short hair and muscular body, the ceremony where Harry was given his medal, and now he knew that he would be remembering this moment along with the others. Ron breathed a sigh and suddenly felt as though he was much older than he really was.

“What is it?” Demelza asked as she touched Ron’s shoulder to bring him back to the present.

“Nothing,” Ron said as he gently took Demelza’s hand in his, “I was just remembering a lot of stuff.”

A sly grin crept its way to Demelza’s face, “was I in any of them?”

Ron answered with his own smile, “not really, but if you like I can make you a part of the new ones.” Neville and Luna just watched in silence, but Neville stiffened in surprise and delight when Luna reached over and took his hand in hers.

At about this time, the music stopped, and Harry and Hermione looked deep into each other’s eyes. All the love they had for each other radiating from their gazes. Harry spoke first, “I love you Hermione.”

Hermione smiled at Harry and answered, “I love you Harry.”

The two of them then came together in a long and passionate kiss, which was accompanied by many joyous cheers from faculty and students alike, as the Ball began in earnest. Harry and Hermione stopped kissing after about twenty seconds, not caring who saw them and ignoring all the shouting and cheers from those assembled.

They stayed on the dance floor for a long time and just enjoyed being with each other. They all danced the night away and talked amongst friends for the entire evening. When it was over, Harry, Ron, Richard, Neville, and their dates got together to return to their dormitories.

“It was a wonderful night wasn’t it?” Hermione asked out loud.

“It sure was,” Ginny answered, “I am looking forward to the rest of the year and what else McGonagall has in store.”

“Yeah,” Ron said, “I’m looking forward to getting to know my date a lot better.” He winked at Demelza who winked back at him and took a tighter grip of his hand.

The eight friends continued onward into the night after the wonderful evening they had had. It was a new beginning, a new world, and everything was perfect. The possibilities were endless, and all of them were determined to make the most of it, together.
Harry, Bill, and Sean became known as the Heroes of Hogwarts, and their great victory became a national holiday in the wizarding world. For Harry, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and the other students at Hogwarts, the next year truly was a great one. Without the looming threat of Lord Voldemort, they were free to enjoy their youth and concentrate on their studies and enjoying their childhoods. There seemed to be no end to the promised festivities, and the students enjoyed numerous fireworks displays, great feasts, and dances.

Harry was once again captain of the Quidditch team and incorporated elements of the training Sean had put him through into training the team. Needless to say, all the members of the team, Ron Weasley-keeper, Sheila Davids (a fourth year who was Katie Bell’s replacement), Demelza Robbins, and Ginny Wesley-chasers, and Jimmy Peakes, and Richard Coote-beaters, were in excellent physical condition, and were strong in body and mind. At the end of the season, the Gryffindor Quidditch team of that year was regarded as the greatest in the history of the school.

Harry and Hermione went to all of the dances and other events together and were always the focus, the hero of Hogwarts and his ladylove. Ron and Harry remained best friends, but Harry was a lot more focused on his studies and ended up helping Ron with a lot of his classes—Harry even helped Hermione on a few occasions. They all graduated with exceptional marks and went on to successful professions.

Ron became a professional Quidditch keeper and even played for the England World Cup team. He and Demelza Robins married soon after Ron became a professional keeper and had a very happy life together with six children.

Hermione and Harry continued seeing each other after graduation, after a few months, they were married and moved into 12 Grimmauld Place for a while before moving to Godric’s Hallow to help bring new life into the town, which began to prosper after the boy who vanquished Voldemort moved in.

Harry became an Auror, eventually becoming head of the Auror’s Office, and Hermione became a great healer. About a year after they were married, Harry and Hermione had their first child, a baby boy that they named James Sean Potter. They would later welcome a girl, Lily, two more boys, Sirius, and Albus, and lastly another daughter, Judith, into the family.

Fleur had a healthy baby boy about nine months after Sean went back to the monastery. She and Bill named him Sean William Weasley and named Sean Alexander O’Sullivan the child’s godfather. Bill decided to resign his post at Gringott’s and take up Auror training. He graduated in the same class as Harry Potter and the two of them were partners until Bill’s retirement and Harry’s promotion to head of the office, Bill’s experience as a Curse-Breaker made him ideal for the post.

Minister Moody enjoyed a very informative and eye-opening tour of the Order of St. George monastery in Ireland. He and the Priest became very good friends, consulting often through their special mirrors, and the alliance between the Wizard world and the Order of St. George was never again dissolved.

The alliance became a great one, with the Order of St. George training Aurors and Obliviators in combat and arming them with swords and other weapons, and the Ministry of Magic providing the Order of St. George with such magical tools as invisibility cloaks, floo powder, and other magical tools that one didn’t have to be a wizard to use. Aurors and Obliviators would often work together with Knights, utilizing the Aurors ability to apparate, and the Knights skills in combat and tracking.

Shortly after the Great Battle at Hogwarts, as it would come to be known, Lupin and Tonks were married in a solemn ceremony at the same place where James and Lily Potter had been married several years ago. Tonks took good care of Lupin and the two of them enjoyed a long and happy life together, with three daughters—none of whom were werewolves.

Kingsley Shacklebolt also made history by being the first Defense Against the Dark Arts professor in a long time to return
for a second year. He came back again, and again, and again, in all he taught for thirty years before retiring.

Sean returned to Mullingar to pay respect to his parents and go through the house where Raiganzi had first crossed his path. The pain of the memories being too much, Sean moved to Blackrock, Ireland to take Harry's advice and become a box

He fell under the tutelage of a great trainer named Sal Bagstram, an infamous trainer known for scaring off fighters with his brutal training methods. Sean submitted himself completely to the training, some of which involved Sal putting him on a high protein diet, having him lift lots of big weights, and pounding his stomach with a sledgehammer while he did sit-ups.

Sean put on thirty pounds of muscle to make it into the heavyweight division and was chosen to represent the Republic of Ireland at the Summer Olympics. As Harry had predicted, Sean was unstoppable. In every single bout, he landed an unprecedented 100 percent of his punches and won by knockout. He was subjected to eighteen different drug tests by the IOC because they could not believe that a fighter as young as he was, and an amateur nonetheless, could be as strong or as effective as he was.

Sean won the Gold Medal, and was the subject of one of the most memorable photos in sports history when he took off his headgear and walked around the ring after the Gold Medal bout waving the Irish flag, and later when he sang along to the Irish National Anthem in the native Irish language. Sean became a national hero to his country and was very much honored there.

After the Olympics, he turned pro and was known as Sean "the Slaughter Man" O'Sullivan. He furthered his appeal to the people of Ireland by training in a black Under Armour sleeveless tee with the words "Celtic Warrior" on the front and "Erin go Braugh" on the back, and fighting in trunks with the pattern of the Irish flag and the word "Laoch" (Irish Gaelic for "warrior") across the waistband.

Spectators at his fights, going back to the Olympics, would chant "Laoch" as he fought. He eventually became the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world and retired undefeated after a record setting fifty fights, with thirty title defenses and all his wins by technical knock out or knock out.

Between fights during his career, he would go back to the monastery and train Knights and new recruits. He also introduced new elements of training into the Order such as weight lifting and jumping rope. He started preparing for retirement by having a cottage built about thirty miles away from the monastery in the Cliffs of Moher. The cottage was ready by the time he had retired and he lived there for the rest of his life, training Knights and new recruits for the Order that he so loved.

Ginny was made seeker and appointed captain for the Gryffindor Quidditch team after Harry graduated. She did very well in her schooling and thought of becoming a healer like her friend Hermione. She wore Sean's crucifix around her neck for the rest of the time she was at school and after, always dreaming of the day when we would come to claim it and, she hoped, her. Bill kept her posted on Sean's boxing career, sending her Muggle newspaper clippings and magazine articles, and when he sent her a poster that had been made of Sean standing shirtless in a meat locker with his newly buffed and chiseled physique, his Order of St. George brand visible, his arms at his sides, and with a meat hook in each of his hands, Sean quickly became a pinup in all the girls dorms at Hogwarts.

After her graduation, Ginny decided to work for a while until she thought of what exactly she wanted to do for a career. She eventually got a job at Gringott's; with Bill's recommendation she was a shoe in, and spent the next several months attending weddings for her brothers and friends from Hogwarts (including being maid of honor for Harry and Hermione's). Then, three days before the first Christmas after she graduated from Hogwarts, something happened that would change her life forever.
Chapter: 37

Epilogue 2:

It was cold outside as Ginny Wesley looked out the window at the snow-covered grounds around her family’s home at the Burrow. She was in her room, sitting on her bed and looking out her bedroom window. She sighed as she thought of all her loved ones. Bill and Fleur would be coming over the next day with their young son Sean. Ginny smiled at the thought of her little nephew, she really loved spending time with him and imagined what it would be like to have children of her own. Ron and Demelza were spending Christmas with Demelza’s parents, Charlie, Percy, Fred, George, and Harry, were all spending Christmas with their in-laws as well.

She lay down on her bed and looked at the wall, which was decorated by a fairly large poster of the current #1 contender for the heavyweight boxing championship. She gave a love struck sigh as she looked at Sean’s image and wondered what it would be like to touch his newly developed body.

Her eyes scanned her walls and looked at some of the newspaper and magazine articles Bill had sent her. One was an interview he had done with a Muggle magazine called “Sports Illustrated” entitled “Slaughterhouse Five, Ten Rounds With The Slaughter Man,” one of the newspaper articles from the Olympics said “Irish Phenom Wins Gold,” and another more recent one read “Slaughter Man Tearing Through Competition.”

She then looked down at the iron crucifix around her neck and wondered how much longer she would be wearing it. She remembered Richard wishing her the best in the future and with Sean, but to consider him an alternative to being single if it came to that. Ginny decided that her time would be better spent outside of her room, and she made her way downstairs to where her Mum and Dad were.

They both greeted her joyfully; they loved having their little girl home for the Christmas holidays.

“How are you dear?” Mr. Weasley asked.

“I’m okay,” Ginny answered with a slightly wistful voice.

“You were thinking about him again weren’t you?” Mrs. Weasley asked as she gestured to the crucifix around her daughter’s neck.

“Yes,” Ginny answered honestly, “I hope that he is having a Merry Christmas wherever he is.”

“Bill tells me that Sean is doing very well,” Mr. Weasley said, “and that he will soon be fighting for a championship.”

Ginny smiled at that, she was very happy for Sean’s success and hoped that whatever came, he would be happy. There were times when she thought that he would forget about her and that she would be wearing his crucifix forever. She made a decision inside that she would wait until after he retired from boxing, and if he still hadn’t shown up, as much as it would break her heart, she would move on and find someone else, Richard Cootes if he was still on the market. But inwardly, she knew that she could never love another man.

She often thought back to the moment they shared in the garden at Hogwarts and when she told him goodbye before the start of her sixth year. His image was stuck in her memory; she could remember every detail of his hair, his eyes, and his body. She looked at the Christmas tree that her parents had set up in the main room and was grateful to be with her family. She sat in the living room with her parents for a little while. The three of them just sat and enjoyed each other’s company, grateful that they had all survived the events of a few years back, and that they could be together in this time of great peace.
After a little while, Mrs. Weasley’s eyes wandered over to the window, and then she saw something. She could faintly make out a figure in the distance walking towards the house.

“What the devil!” she shouted causing alarm in her husband and daughter.

“What is it?” Mr. Weasley said after he had recovered from his initial surprise.

“There’s someone coming toward the house,” Mrs. Weasley answered.

“Is Bill coming early?” Ginny asked.

“It’s not Bill,” Mrs. Weasley said, “he isn’t coming until tomorrow, and he’s bringing Fleur and the baby with him…this person’s alone.”

At this point, Mr. Weasley and Ginny both came to the window and looked out at the horizon. They could see a figure with a duffel bag over one shoulder and dressed in a black stocking cap, a pair of gloves, long pants, waterproof hiking boots, and a fleece coat, moving closer to the house.

“Ginny dear,” Mrs. Weasley said, “would you mind walking ahead a little and finding out who this person is? Your father and I will prepare a room for if he needs a place to stay the night.”

Ginny nodded and went to get her hat, coat, and scarf. She put on her coat, then her scarf, and lastly her hat and made her way down the stairs. Ginny then opened the door and was off.

It was cold outside and snowflakes were gently falling around her, but Ginny had been through worse, and the stranger was stopped about ten yards from the house when she got outside--then her eyes adjusted and she could see who it was, she could tell by the eyes.

Ginny froze in her tracks as she moved about five feet away from the house and the stranger walked closer, he put his bag on the ground and removed his stocking cap to reveal a short crew cut of dark blonde hair, which accompanied a pair of Prussian blue eyes.

“Sean?” she asked with disbelief to the stranger in front of her.

The stranger’s face brightened a bit as he simply answered, with a deep Irish accent, “Hello Ginerva.”

The two of them stood motionless for a few moments until Sean began walking closer towards Ginny. When he was a few steps away from her, Ginny jumped forward to close the gap between them.

Sean caught her in the air and spun her around once, ending with Ginny’s back to the Burrow. Ginny laughed happily as Sean gently placed her back on the ground. Sean did not release his grip on the beautiful twenty-year-old woman in front of him but wrapped his arms around her slender waist. They both looked into each other’s eyes as snowflakes gently fell around them, neither one of them wanting to look away.

“I must be dreaming” Ginny said to Sean in her cute English accent.

Sean looked straight back into Ginny’s beautiful brown eyes and responded in an uncharacteristically upbeat voice with “if this is a dream, then we’d better make the most of it.”

Ginny sighed gently and then got a look of pure love on her face as she wrapped her arms around Sean’s neck. They both knew what they wanted to happen next, and they both knew that the other wanted the same thing. Their lips slowly came closer together until there was no space left between them.

Mrs. Weasley had come downstairs and could tell that the stranger was Sean O’Sullivan. She could tell that the two of
them were entirely focused on each other and nothing else. She couldn’t help herself and looked out the window. When she saw Ginny jump into Sean’s arms, Mrs. Weasley thought that her own heart would jump out of her body from joy.

When they started kissing, she turned around and said as loud as she could without disturbing the young people outside, “Arthur! Come quick!”

Mr. Weasley came downstairs in time to witness the last ten seconds of the kiss. “Is that Sean?” he asked his wife.

“Of course it is” Mrs. Weasley answered as if it was the most obvious thing in the world, “and I’ll bet he is a great kisser.”

After she finished saying that, her husband surprised her and spun her into a dip before planting a big kiss on her lips. “But not as good as me, eh Mollywobbles?” Mr. Weasley said with confidence as he broke their kiss.

“Of course not darling” Mrs. Weasley said with a big smile on her blushing face.

Ginny poured all the passion she could into that kiss, Sean’s first, and Sean did his best to respond. He had never kissed a girl like this before, and he knew that he never wanted to kiss another one besides the one in front of him. Ginny on the other hand had kissed a few guys, but this one was different. The ones in the past had been adolescent flings with nothing truly enduring involved. But here and now, as she passionately kissed the young man in front of her, she knew that she wanted this to last forever.

After about fifteen seconds, they slowly came apart. Ginny got a big smile on her face and bit her bottom lip. Sean maintained his usual face, but Ginny could see that he was being sincere, and didn’t care if his face didn’t look exactly the way she had dreamed of her Prince Charming’s face looking.

“It’s cold out,” Sean said, “you should probably be getting inside.”

Ginny just smiled and simply said, “I don’t feel the cold.”

Sean maintained his serious and sincere expression when he said, “I never stopped thinking about you Ginerva. I would have come earlier, but I wanted to wait until Christmas.”

Ginny looked back at Sean and simply said, “you have given me the best Christmas present I could have hoped for…just please tell me that you will be staying for at least a few days.”

Sean smirked and answered, “I plan on staying for at most two weeks, depending on your mother making good on her offer.

Ginny blushed, and Sean did so also for the first time in his life. Mr. Weasley opened the door and invited them in, “we have prepared a room for you Sean,” he said in a kind and welcoming voice.

“Thank you” Sean said as he picked up his bag and hat and walked into the Burrow.

Mrs. Weasley sprang at him, nearly knocking him off his feet, and gave him a kind of hug that he vaguely remembered receiving from his mother many years ago.

After she had gotten over the pleasant surprise of feeling Sean’s new muscular physique, she spoke, “I am so glad that you are here,” she said to the chiseled young man in front of her. “I will show you to your room, how long are you going to be staying?”

“I was thinking of two weeks if that’s okay,” Sean said.
“Stay forever” Mrs. Weasley answered. After hearing this, Sean turned to look at Ginny who merely gave him a wink, which he returned.

Christmas that year was wonderful, Bill arrived the next day and he and Sean had a great time together. Sean especially enjoyed seeing and spending time with his godson. Although it was winter, Sean strived to keep up with his training. Ginny insisted on helping in whatever way she could. She ended up helping by cheering him on when he did his sit-ups, and by sitting Indian-style on his back when he did push-ups; Mr. Weasley even did that once and everyone marveled at how strong Sean had become.

The highlight of the holiday season was on Christmas day when the Weasleys were pleasantly surprised to find gifts for all of them from Sean in his duffle bag. Mr. Weasley received a book about airplanes and other aerospace technology, which thrilled him to no end. Mrs. Weasley was given a cookbook full of different Irish dishes, with a handwritten recipe for Irish stew inside from Sean himself and a humorous note reading “this will put some hair on your chest.”

Fleur received a ruby sapphire to be placed in the center of the jade shamrock Sean had given her back at her wedding. Sean gave Bill a steel bar with a high-tension spring in the middle that, when bended, helps strengthen and tone the upper body, to help Bill get stronger. Bill joked that with this he could be as strong as Sean…in about two hundred years. Sean gave his godson Sean William a beautiful picture book of the many wonderful sights of Ireland.

But the greatest present was for Ginny, it was a small box, and Sean asked Ginny to stand up so he could hand it to her. As Ginny unwrapped it, Sean dropped to a knee. She saw a velvet box and opened it to reveal a beautiful silver ring with a band in the Celtic knot pattern and a brilliant red ruby, which matched the color of her hair, in the center at the top.

Tears of joy welled up in Ginny’s eyes and there were several audible gasps around the room as she saw the present and realized what it meant.

“Ginerva Molly Weasley” Sean said, “I have loved you since the moment I first saw you, it has taken me this long to realize and accept that. You’re the only woman that I want by my side for this life and the next. Will you marry me?”

Ginny looked past the ring and into the hopeful and sincere eyes of Sean O’Sullivan. “Sean,” she said with lots of emotion in her voice, “of course I will marry you.” Sean then stood up and put the ring around her finger as the rest of the family cheered and urged them on.

Ginny got her wish to live happily ever after with her handsome Knight. Sean and Ginny were married outdoors in front of the Order Monastery on the Cliffs of Moher in a traditional Celtic/Christian wedding a few months after Ginny accepted Sean’s proposal, with Sean’s Sagart performing the ceremony. Despite Sean’s being Irish and Ginny’s being English, they were very accepted in Sean’s native land and got along great together—although it was always interesting during the Quidditch World Cup.

There were of course hardships, but they faced and came through them together. Sean ended up taking Ginny on a wonderful honeymoon around Ireland, and then to Thailand, one of the places where he had spent his training, and the two of them had a wonderful time. Sean even participated in a few Muay Thai fights while in Thailand…the Thai people loved that a European boxing champion, by this time Sean had won his first Heavyweight Championship, humbled, respected, and excelled at their sport so much and cheered him on.

After the honeymoon, the two of them went back to Sean’s house in Blackrock. Sean still had a ways to go before reaching his goal of fifty fights, and Ginny was behind him all the way. She would sometimes accompany him to the gym when he went to train with Sal, and would exercise with him in the morning; Sal would often compliment Sean on his good taste in choosing a wife.

Right after the honeymoon was over, Ginny announced her first pregnancy to Sean. He couldn’t have been happier, but a little nervous at becoming a father.
Ginny wanted their children to love their Celtic heritage as Sean did. Ginny herself learned to understand Irish Gaelic, but she could never get the pronunciation right, and when the children came, she and Sean agreed that Ginny would speak to them in English and that Sean would speak to them in Irish Gaelic…resulting in their children being bilingual from a very young age.

They gave their children, for all of whose births they returned to the cottage in the cliffs, Celtic names. Their first-born, a son, they named Kellen, a Celtic name meaning “mighty warrior”, their second child, another son, they named Dillion, a Celtic name for “faithful”, and they named their daughter Allena, a Celtic name for “beautiful.” They all lived in the cottage, which Sean had designed to be a three-bedroom, and were often visited by Bill, Harry, Hermione, and many others of their friends.

The children were educated inside the monastery while Sean would be training in Blackrock, for which time floo powder was very welcomed, or on the monastery grounds to teach Knights and new recruits how to fight. By the time Sean was thirty-five, he won his fiftieth fight with a KO in the third round. He had announced his retirement sometime before the fight, and had insisted that it be in Ireland. After the fight was over, he brought Sal, Ginny, and his and Ginny’s children into the ring and walked around it in a victory lap while waving the Irish flag with one of his children each holding a championship belt and the entire crowd chanting “Laoch!” over and over again.

After he retired from boxing, Sean gave his house in Blackrock to his trainer Sal and permanently moved into the cottage in the Cliffs of Moher, never leaving except for trips to the city, for which he kept a house rented in Dublin where they could use floo powder to travel to. The O’Sullivans had ideas for a wonderful life in the cliffs until the children would go into the city for University studies.

However, a big change occurred the summer after Kellen turned eleven when a mysterious owl arrived at their house with a letter. It had a seal that was very familiar to Ginny, and was addressed:

Kellen O’Sullivan

The Cottage in the Cliffs

Cliffs of Moher, Ireland

The End

Author’s note: That’s the story. If you liked this one, then you can read the sequel “Harry Potter and the Great Abomination.”
The END