

## Fate Granted

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/17012046) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/17012046>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Mature</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Harry Potter - J. K. Rowling</a>
Relationships:	<a href="#">Harry Potter/Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">Harry Potter/Voldemort</a> , <a href="#">Harry Potter/Tom Riddle   Voldemort</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Harry Potter</a> , <a href="#">Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">Mrs Cole (Harry Potter)</a> , <a href="#">Amy Benson</a> , <a href="#">Dennis Bishop</a> , <a href="#">Billy Stubbs</a> , <a href="#">Abraxas Malfoy</a> , <a href="#">Walburga Black</a> , <a href="#">Orion Black</a> , <a href="#">Alphard Black</a> , <a href="#">Albus Dumbledore</a> , <a href="#">Horace Slughorn</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Childhood Friends</a> , <a href="#">Childhood</a> , <a href="#">Wool's Orphanage (Harry Potter)</a> , <a href="#">Hogwarts</a> , <a href="#">1940s</a> , <a href="#">Eventual Romance</a> , <a href="#">Time Travel</a> , <a href="#">Possessive Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">Mystery</a> , <a href="#">Knights of Walpurgis</a> , <a href="#">Manipulative Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">Innocent Harry</a> , <a href="#">Work In Progress</a>
Language:	English
Collections:	<a href="#">Harry Potter Fanfic Must Reads</a> , <a href="#">Harry in the Past</a> , <a href="#">Harry Potter</a> , <a href="#">Harry and Tom growing up together</a> , <a href="#">Time Travel Fics</a>
Stats:	Published: 2018-12-16 Updated: 2023-09-07 Words: 60,249 Chapters: 33/?

# Fate Granted

by [Flipdarkchill](#)

## Summary

When a young Tom Riddle demands a friend in the middle of the night, he did not truly expect anything to happen. At least, not right away....

## Notes

Hello, this is my first work on this site. I'm a bit away at the moment, so I can only write sometimes, but I wanted to post it so I can write and get some feedback. I'll update whenever I can. I love this pairing because its so cute, so I wanted to write my own. Hopefully it turns out okay... and sorry if I make any mistakes with the timeline, it's been a while since I've read the books, I'm mostly going off whatever I remember.

# Prologue

October, 1933

He knew what it *was*. And he knew what it looked like too, if Amy Benson's hoard of female playmates was anything to go by. But Tom Riddle did not need *it*. He had managed just fine on his own thus far—besides, he could talk to snakes, and what more did one need? So as Tom reassured himself for the thousandth time that night, while he channeled his power into this single, irrational desire, he was not asking for a *friend* at all; no, he was merely testing the limit of his powers, and the full extent of what his gift could grant.

Yes, for Tom could make things move at will. He could make the animals do what he wanted. Even more recently, he discovered he could cause others pain if they hurt or annoyed him. But Tom wanted to find out just how far his power could go... just how far he could push himself, especially if he wanted something that wasn't immediately within his grasp. So no, it wasn't as though Tom actually *wanted* someone to be his friend. He didn't actually *want* anyone to talk to, share his bedroom with, or, God forbid, someone to actually *play* with outside. No. Tom had long ago realized how pathetic it was to rely on anyone, least of all something as demeaning as friends. No, Tom was merely curious as to whether he could have a person to be his friend, whether or not he could find someone who was, presumably, compatible with himself, and then bring them to him—yes, and surely that was the only reason he was even asking for *it* in the first place.

It was quite a shock when something actually happened. Not that Tom didn't believe his powers would work; on the contrary, he just didn't expect anything to happen quite so soon...or so dramatically either. He might have expected another orphan to be dropped off in the coming days, or perhaps an existing orphan he had not already scared away would come to his side the next morning... to be honest, Tom wasn't quite sure what he had expected his power to do with such an ambiguous request. Therefore, it was quite a startling experience to see a blinding flash of white light sweep through his room, and then a child no older than himself drop softly at the end of his bed.

Sitting there gaping was slightly unbecoming of Tom, so he closed his mouth, and after a few moments of observation in a tense, quiet excitement, a small smirk appeared on his lips. It actually *worked*. His power had actually granted him a *person*. Unlikely and impossible as it first seemed, it had taken an actual boy, presumably from his home and away from his family, and handed him, quite literally, over to Tom.

After a few more moments of shock and staring, and when he was sure the other boy was still asleep, Tom examined the strange child who had appeared before him, curled up in a tiny ball at Tom's feet. He was a scrawny child, small and pale, with striking black hair that was half wild and sticking up in all directions. He also noticed he was wearing clothes far too big for him and wondered whether it was a personal choice or some kind of special sleepwear. He didn't snore, for which Tom was thankful of. But as he watched the boy

sleeping, he noticed he seemed to be dreaming, curling on tighter and shivering, occasionally gasping for air.

As Tom watched in mild fascination, his thoughts drifted to how he should approach the situation. Convincing Mrs. Cole to take in another boy would not be an issue. Tom's room was still lacking a roommate, after all, and if he played his cards right, he was sure he could convince the old hag that one more boy wouldn't make too much of a difference.

The real problem was what to tell the *boy*. Would he protest? Would he put up a fight and want to go back home? Should he tell the child straightaway that he was going to live in an orphanage now, and that he really had no choice since Tom had technically summoned him and thus, was technically his? The child likely already had a family, who would wake up in the morning to find their son missing. They would probably call the police, and the resulting investigation could lead them back to the orphanage... in which case the boy would return home, and Tom would be left alone once again...no, that wouldn't do.

But first. He needed to wake him up.

## Chapter 2

When young Harry Potter went to sleep that night in the small cot of his cupboard, dreaming again of a bright green light and flying motorbikes, he was sure it was still the middle of the night when he felt something unexpected—the sharp prodding of his aunt’s fingers on his shoulder. He groaned, not wanting to wake up just yet. He wasn’t sure what she wanted, but it couldn’t possibly be morning yet. But he did not want to make her angry. He might just go without food again.

Opening his eyes all but made him startle in sudden confusion. For Harry was not staring into the hateful glare of his aunt, uncle, or even his cousin, but instead into the dark eyes of a stranger, a boy, who was roughly tapping his shoulder in an effort to wake him. Sitting up wildly, Harry looked around the room in confusion, a lump in his throat as he did not know where he was, or how he had come to be here. It was dark, and while the bed was small and cramped, it was still much better than the torn mattress his uncle had shoved under the stairs to serve as Harry’s bedroom. He turned to look at the other boy, who was studying him quietly. He looked of similar age, but taller, with neatly trimmed hair though his pajamas looked slightly worn.

Then, just as Harry was going to question the boy about where he was, he had a horrible thought. As all horrible thoughts came to him whenever he was scared. What if... *what if* this was another one of Harry’s ‘freakish’ accidents? What if he had somehow caused himself to *teleport* into another boy’s room while he slept? His uncle would have yelled at him for such a thought, but Harry couldn’t help it. He still remembered when he ran from Dudley and his gang and somehow managed to land on the school roof when he had jumped behind the bins. He still did not know how that had happened, but his suspension from school, the scolding, and the subsequent lock down in his cupboard for nearly a month had terrified him of a repeat. He did not want to get into a similar situation again. He did not want to be locked up and punished, no food and endless chores, for disturbing some family with his unexplained presence.

With the awkward situation growing by the minute, and the silence getting to him, Harry stood up and bit his lip, putting some distance between them. He stammered and stumbled backwards towards the door,

“I-I’m sorry for...um...I-I didn’t mean to—! I’ll just—”

---

Tom Riddle was perplexed. Confused even. He was rarely so. Here was his supposed friend, awkwardly attempting to take in the situation, and then jumping and backing up towards the door. While the confusion and nervousness was something expected, what

confused Tom more was the fact that the boy was *apologizing*...as if this whole situation was somehow *his* fault? And what did he mean by that phrase? He didn't mean to... what?

Tom snapped out of his daze when he noticed the boy leaning towards the door, his hand groping behind him for the handle and trying to leave as quickly and as quietly as possible. Tom moved so fast even he was surprised by his sudden agility. He grabbed the boy's arm before he could make it and quickly put his palm to the boy's mouth, muffling his surprise. The walls were rather thin, and he didn't want anyone investigating if there was too much noise. The boy didn't struggle too much as he hauled him back to the bed and forced him to sit down. Putting a finger to his mouth that he needed him to be quiet, only when he nodded did Tom release his hand. Then, Tom quickly used some of his power to keep the boy from running and began his questions.

---

When the other boy had suddenly grabbed his arm and pulled him away from the door, Harry hadn't known what to do other than shout in alarm. However, his yell was stifled by a hand as he was quickly led back to the bed and forced to sit down.

Taking in the dark room and the way the taller boy signaled for him to keep quiet, Harry understood that other people were probably asleep in the house. His mouth was released, and Harry took a deep breath. He was thankful he hadn't caused any noise to wake up anyone else. Maybe the boy would help him get back home—he could return to the Dursley's, sneak back inside and nobody would even know he had left. Harry dearly hoped so.

Then, Harry felt his back stiffen unnaturally, and he could not move. He felt a tremor of fear as he realized it was not his doing. It was the boy.

“What's your name?” the boy abruptly asked, leaning over Harry in a way that made him uncomfortable. He frowned, still unable to move. He squirmed under the invisible bonds holding him down. He tried to answer without giving away too much. If he did manage to get back home, he didn't want the boy telling anyone he was here.

“Harry.”

---

“Harry...what?”

Tom frowned, especially when the boy, presumably Harry, went quiet when he asked for his last name. When the boy eventually said something in a small voice, “Peters”, to which Tom smirked. This boy was clearly very bad at lying. He could instantly tell his real name was Harry, but the last name was a lie. Tom didn't want to scare his new friend too much before they got to properly know each other, so he withheld his power to force the answer out and asked something different.

“Where do you live?”

---

The boy was rude, that much Harry was sure of. If he wasn't so afraid by his sudden immobility, he might have refused to answer. As it was, Harry was sure the other boy was gathering information, so he could report him to the police. Harry had appeared in his room without any explanation, and it only made sense to contact the authorities. The thought made Harry sick, thinking about what would happen when he returned home.

"I live in Surrey...and um...I didn't mean to do...I think it was an accident..." he started fidgeting with his hands, the hold on his body on his body lessening somewhat, but when he could no longer contain his rising panic, he pleaded out in fear, "Please don't call the police! I didn't mean to come here...I'll go back, but please don't call them...please..." he finished rather lamely, nearly trembling in his rush to get the other to understand. Then he waited, shut his eyes tightly against his tears because he knew the boy was likely to ignore him.

---

"The police?" Tom asked, uncertain he had heard right.

But when he thought about it, it made sense. Harry's nervousness, the random apologizing, the lie about his full name. The boy clearly believed *he* was the one responsible for his random appearance here, no matter how strange or absurd the fact was. He was afraid of Tom calling the police. He smirked, realizing he could work with this. He could use Harry's own assumption against him to find out more. He sat down beside the trembling boy. He may as well calm him down, at least. Tom had no intention of ever calling the police, be it now or in the future.

Feigning confusion over the situation, Tom spoke softly to the boy,

"Call the police? I'm not going to call them, at least, not yet anyway. My name is Tom Riddle, by the way. This is an orphanage."

---

Harry flinched. He didn't mean to. While his initial fear was relieved somewhat when the boy, Tom Riddle, said he wouldn't call the police right away, his next words startled Harry so much, he couldn't stop his surprise from showing, a new fear taking its place.

"A-An Orphanage?"

---

Tom looked at the smaller boy. His emotions had ranged intensely in just a few minutes, from fear, panic, uncertainty, and now to fear again, with a dawning comprehension in his eyes, as if he now understood why he was here and how it had happened.

"Yes, this is an orphanage...it's called Wool's, and the matron is Mrs. Cole."

Tom smiled internally, realizing he might just get off with this easier than he anticipated. He imagined a struggle to get the boy to stay here, especially if he wanted to return to his previous, happy life. But seeing the fear, then the sad acceptance in his eyes, Tom realized that Harry was most likely an orphan too, or else lived in a situation with people who did not want him.

“Are you an orphan too?”

---

Harry didn't know what to say. The truth hurt a lot more than he thought it would. Despite the fact that Harry had always known his relatives didn't want him, he had always silently believed that they would accept him... and now, the fact that they had abandoned him in an orphanage during the night, without even telling him, hurt more than he was willing to admit.

His cousin often hit him, and Harry had no friends in the area because Dudley always scared them away. He slept in the cupboard under the stairs, even though there was two extra rooms in the house. He wore Dudley's old clothes despite the fact that they didn't fit him. His aunt and uncle constantly yelled at him, even when he did nothing wrong. He did all of the chores, but even when he cooked a full breakfast for them, Harry was lucky if he got any leftovers. Whenever something strange happened he was always punished for it, locked inside his cupboard for days. He knew they didn't love him. He *knew* that. But still, he didn't think they would actually put him in an orphanage, no matter how many times they threatened it.

“Yes...” Harry said softly, looking down at his hands, “My parents died in a car crash... I live with my aunt and uncle... and cousin, but they've never liked me very much... I guess...”

---

This was perfect. Tom had to visibly suppress his excitement, because he couldn't have asked for a better situation to present itself. Harry was an orphan, like him, and from what little the boy had said, Tom could guess that his relatives rejected him, perhaps frequently- he would get more information later, but for now, this was the perfect opportunity to get the boy to live here. From Harry's defeated expression, it seemed the boy believed he had been dropped off at the orphanage during the night. It didn't matter if this was true or not. If Harry fully believed it himself, and Tom did not deny or accept it, then the boy would feel compelled to stay of his own accord. Besides, if his family really *did* reject him that much, and so easily too, perhaps living at Wool's would be better for him... if such a thing was even possible.

But as Tom watched the boy carefully from the side, the hurt expression in his eyes, the thought of being abandoned and left to live to institutional squalor, he felt strangely transfixed at the sight, oddly detached from his previous glee. Normally, Tom would be annoyed at such a display of weakness, but instead he laid a hand on his shoulder, releasing his power so Harry could move on his own. Only after did Tom realize he had just comforted the boy automatically. Strange.



“Well, if you’re an orphan too, then I suppose you’ll be staying here...? I can inform Mrs. Cole in the morning...and you can sleep here tonight.”

Moving over, Tom allowed the boy under the blankets beside him. It was cramped in such a small bed, but he didn’t mind, since Harry was technically *his* friend now, the friend his power had thought to grant to him and no one else. When the boy settled down beside him, curling up into a tiny ball once more, he couldn’t help but study Harry once more. Tom knew he didn’t feel guilty about anything... Harry didn’t ask him how he got here, and even if he had, Tom would have encouraged the boy to believe his own thoughts, that his relatives had abandoned him during the night. Still, when Tom drifted off into sleep, his chest ached in an unfamiliar way, and his thoughts nagged at the image of the boy beside him, curled into a ball, and utterly failing to drown out the quiet sniffs and shudders that came throughout the night.

## Chapter 3

By the time morning arrived, Tom had successfully managed to convince Mrs. Cole into allowing Harry to stay at the orphanage. He knew he was right to complain about the building's tight capacity, too; Mrs. Cole, predictably, assumed he merely trying to rid himself of yet another roommate, and as 'punishment', he was to share his room with Harry. As if the old woman could ever make him *share* his room with anyone. No, Tom would have Harry, and no one else.

Harry, for his part, followed along quietly from behind, hardly saying a word but to answer the questions about who he was and his family situation. Annoyingly, the boy still refused to reveal his real surname, and when the matron asked, she stupidly believed the boy's timid response of "Peters". But it didn't matter, for now at least. Tom would eventually call Harry out on this tiny white lie when a more favorable opportunity arrived.

So when breakfast was finally served, and most of the other children were up for the day with a bubbly chatter that Tom had always found aggravating, Harry was settled into his room with an extra bed and a few spare clothes as required. Afterwards, the young caretaker, Martha, had left Tom to show Harry around— but he didn't miss the way her eyes narrowed with the smallest amount of suspicion, either. He had, after all, been unusually accommodating towards his new 'roommate'. Typically he would have bluntly refused to have them, or else scared them with his powers by now, to make the Matron room them with someone else instead. Martha would likely tell Mrs. Cole and the staff about it later, but it hardly mattered to Tom. The old woman wouldn't be able to pinpoint Tom's compliance as anything other than that— compliance. She would probably just add another notch of fear to Tom's name, sure that he had done something 'strange', or else was up to no good.

And thus by the time Tom led Harry down to the dining hall for breakfast, the other children were already gathered and eating. He didn't miss the way *their* eyes trailed after him in fear and suspicion too, before darting over to the new boy walking next to him. Harry, Tom noticed, looked nervous, and kept his eyes mostly lowered while following along. He seemed anxious, or shy, but somehow, from their conversation last night, Tom had a feeling that wasn't entirely it.

Harry sat at the far end of the table opposite to Tom, beside the large, open windows, while the other children resumed their meals with slightly more chatter than before. But after five minutes, Tom realized Harry had hardly touched his food and was beginning to tremble while staring out the window. He decided to intervene when Harry looked about ready to cry. He could only tolerate so much.

"What's wrong?" he said sharply,

"Nothing..." the boy jumped at his voice, but looking at Tom's sudden glare, he continued to explain,

“I'm sorry... it's just, I'm scared of being alone...my relatives left me, and... besides you, I don't know anyone else...and the other orphans seem so...” he trailed off.

*Well.*

While it was true, and nothing Tom didn't already suspect, it was nevertheless mildly insulting to hear come from the boy's lips. Harry, his granted friend, summoned to be *Tom's* companion only, wanted to be friends with the *other* orphans as well? In Tom's mind, such a thing would never happen; Harry was *his*, Tom had brought him here, and therefore was his alone to talk to—he wouldn't share what was his with anyone else; now he just needed to make sure Harry understood this fact too. Tom had known since last night, thinking as he often did in the early hours, that he would have to deal with the threat of the other orphans taking an interest in Harry, and possibly the other way around. He had a plan ready, of course, to make Harry refrain from going near them, and so putting on an air of sorrow, glancing around the room at the other children, Tom masked his face into the perfect imitation of sympathy and said,

“Harry... I hate to be the one to tell you this, but the other orphans—”

---

When Harry had finally settled in his room with Tom, and the Matron Mrs. Cole had questioned him about his relatives, and then given him a bundle of old clothes to wear, he realized, without a doubt, that he really *was* in an orphanage. Harry had drifted through his interview as though he was walking in a dream. He wasn't sure whether he had hoped it was a truly dream or not, but the reality came crashing down on him anyways as he took in his new surroundings.

His relatives really *did* get rid of him .He was truly alone here. He knew no one besides Tom. The adults seemed just as unfriendly as Harry knew them to be at home, and even with Dudley gone, Harry was scared he wouldn't be welcomed here either. The place felt strange too, as though he was looking through glass; everything was made of wood, and the air felt perpetually cold, frigid and cool despite the sun outside. It was true that Harry didn't know much about orphanages, but he didn't expect it to be so empty either. So far he hadn't seen one television, nor any of the usual toys and things he admired from afar but often couldn't have; like crayons, or coloring books, or even those little figurines Harry had stolen from Dudley once when he lost them in the grass. Instead there were a scare amount of books in the playroom, small, broken, and colorless toys scattered around, and little else.

And besides all of this, whenever Harry glanced around while Tom lead him through the corridors, he saw the others frowning at him, glaring, and a number of them whispering in his direction. Would this place be just like his old home? Where everyone hated him because his baggy clothes and strangeness? Would they call him a freak too?

“What's wrong?” Tom asked suddenly. Harry jumped at his voice, realizing he was sitting now in the dining hall, not eating and on the verge of tears.

“Nothing...” he said, but when he saw that the older boy wasn't too happy with his reply, he hastened to explain,

“I'm sorry...it's just, I'm scared of being alone here...my relatives left me and... besides you, I don't know anyone else...and the other orphans seem so...” He stopped there, hoping Tom would understand his worries about making friends.

At first, Tom didn't reply. He looked thoughtful, his eyes darting around the room instead, watching the other orphans eating far away from the two boys. Then he leaned in, his face sorrowful, and Harry had a brief moment where he felt certain Tom would comfort his anxiety. Tell him it wasn't true. That he could make friends here if he wanted to. But then Tom spoke, and everything came to a halt.

“Harry...I hate to be the one to tell you this, but the other orphans...they really do *hate* you right now.”

*What?*

Harry wasn't sure he'd heard Tom correctly, but his heart was thundering against his rib cage as Tom continued to say what Harry wanted to deny even existed.

“It's true,” Tom confirmed with a sad nod, “You see them over there? Whispering behind our backs? They're jealous. They're angry because you're the *new* orphan. And no one likes new orphans, Harry. Because it means less stuff for them.”

Harry was still in shock from what Tom was saying, before he whispered back, biting his bottom lip,

“But why? I haven't even done anything yet...”

“Don't you see? They hate you *because* you haven't done anything yet. You're simply here, which means less food, less clothes, less room for the rest of them. But really, you shouldn't bother with the others, Harry. You have me still, isn't that enough?”

---

Tom finished his little speech with a feeling of smug satisfaction. He watched Harry's eyes widen at his 'revelation', the momentary fear of being alone and his deepest fears confirmed, and then the flooding of relief when he'd mentioned he still had Tom by his side. It was strange, in a way, to watch Harry like that. He'd known the boy for less than a day and already Tom was becoming fascinated watching him react to different things. While he normally hated the other orphan's pitiful display of weeping and crying, it fascinated him to watch Harry, changing his emotions in mere moments by the whims of Tom, as though Harry's very world hinged on his words, his truthfulness and lies.

Tom still didn't quite understand how he felt towards Harry; was he his friend? Tom didn't know. He had already told himself many times how he didn't need friendship, and how pathetic it was, and he was certain he felt the same now as he did yesterday, even despite his powers suggesting otherwise. But Harry was also his *summoned* friend, which meant that Harry must have the potential to be something to Tom, useful to him in some way; he must have come to Tom for a reason, or they must be similar in some way, which Tom had yet to figure out.

And while it wasn't exactly a *lie* when he told the boy the others hated him... it wasn't entirely the truth either. The older boys really did tend to pick on the newer ones, just to see if they could get anything from them while they were still naive and sad about living in an orphanage...but the truth was something far less interesting, seeing as most of the orphans simply didn't care about new arrivals, as they were all in a similar situation regardless. And Tom knew the others were only whispering about *him*, the 'freak' Tom Riddle, and not so specifically towards Harry.

But now the smaller boy would be afraid of approaching the others, convinced that they hated him for simply being here. Tom would make sure no one approached them either, to prove the boy otherwise, and Harry would soon learn to trust only in Tom. He gleefully imagined a time when Harry would be doing everything he says, obedient to Tom's every demand, as his granted friend should be. But that would come later, surely when the boy finally understood his status as Tom's personal gift to himself, and as such, Tom could do as he pleased with the boy.

Yes, it was all just a matter of time.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The following days were agony for Harry. Even though he *knew* now why the other children hated him, it didn't make their silent taunts and angry, hushed whispers behind his back any easier; especially when they followed him wherever he went.

His only relief was that Tom was by his side the entire time, enduring it just the same. Although Harry did find it odd that Tom wasn't as bothered by it as Harry was. Nothing seemed to affect the older boy, and his face was the perfect mask of indifference. It was also strange that no one talked to Tom as well, and vice versa, but Harry put it aside in his gratefulness towards Tom for staying by his side, even through the worst of it.

And so, four days passed by in the same manner before something actually happened.

Harry was standing outside Mrs. Cole's office alone, waiting for Tom to finish asking for his and Harry's allowances for the winter clothes; he was letting Tom do the negotiating because Harry had a bad habit of accepting only the smallest portion and never asking for more. At the Dursley's, they never got him any winter clothes, and only once gave him his cousin's torn up scarf, which was often better off as it had so many holes in it. Here, however, Harry was going a coat *and* mittens, and possibly a hat too, if Tom got enough. To him it didn't matter if they were bought from a secondhand store— Harry could hardly contain his excitement.

But before Tom came back, a girl he'd seen many times around the orphanage walked up to him cautiously, turning her head towards the door twice, before she whispered to him, as though fearful of being caught,

"Why are you with Tom? Are you like him? Are you a freak too?"

Harry winced when he heard the word 'freak', but it quickly dissolved into the smallest traces of anger.

"No...I'm not a freak...I'm Harry. Just...Harry. And Tom is my friend so—!"

"But aren't you scared of him?" she continued, raising an eyebrow and cutting Harry off, "Do you know what he can do?"

Harry had never heard anyone speak of Tom this way. Why should he be scared? And what could Tom do that had the girl looking at him with wide, knowing eyes? Before he could question her, she went on

"Tom's never had a roommate last longer than a day. That's why we were wondering about you. They go crying to Mrs. Cole... and they're never the same after spending the night with him... you should stay away from him before—!"

The door to Mrs. Cole's office slammed open and Tom walked out. Both Harry and the girl jumped back, as though they were caught doing something they shouldn't. His heart was wildly thumping as Tom took in their guilty faces, and the girl looked as pale as death when his eyes landed on her.

"Amy. What a pleasant surprise." Tom said, laying a hand on Harry's shoulder.

Even Harry could feel the tension in the air, and he was starting to feel scared.

"You know, Harry, I recall seeing Amy's doll on her bed. It's quite lovely isn't it? Wasn't it a gift from your parents?"

Amy looked horrified, her face pale and eyes swimming with tears as Tom continued,

"Ah yes, I remember now— it was the last thing they gave you before coming here, right? Would be a shame if something happened to it—"

"Don't touch my doll!" Amy screamed before rushing up the stairs, presumably to check if her toy was still safe. Which left Tom and Harry alone once again.

Harry had never felt such a suffocating atmosphere around Tom. The older boy's fingers dug into Harry's shoulder painfully, before he suddenly let go. Then he turned around and said,

"Let's go Harry. Lunch will be served soon, and we don't want to lose our spot."

But as Harry rubbed his sore shoulder and followed quietly along, resuming where they had left off, he thought back to what Amy had just told him.

*But aren't you scared of him? Do you know what he can do?*

But what *could* Tom do? Why had he acted like that with Amy? Harry thought about what Tom said, about losing their spot for lunch. When Harry remembered the last few days, they always sat at the same table by the windows. And it was *always* empty. Even if all the other tables were full, somehow, their spot was always free. He'd thought it was just a coincidence, but now...

*Tom's never had a roommate last longer than a day....*

Was it just his imagination? Or was there something going on that Harry didn't know?

---

Amy Benson. The whore. He'd seen her looking at Harry for days now, trying to catch him when Tom wasn't looking. It was obvious what she was doing too; trying to set Harry against him, like the rest of them.

But what Amy didn't know was that her plan wouldn't work. It *couldn't* work. Harry had come to him by Tom's powers alone, and his power would never go against him. Harry was sure to stay with Tom forever, he thought viciously. Although, perhaps just to be safe, he might try and push Harry a little, to make the boy understand better...

Yes, he would do... *that*.

---

Tom waited three days before finally carrying out his plan. He wanted Harry to come to *him*, for a change, for the smaller boy to be desperate enough for *his* friendship, so much that Harry would beg Tom for his forgiveness, and eventually, the boy would learn to disregard the other insufficient orphans in favor of Tom. After all, Tom had already accepted Harry as his specially granted gift, so surely it was Harry's turn to realize that he belonged to Tom as well.

Tom's plan was simple— to ensure Harry would never leave him for anyone else. The first step was for Tom to leave Harry to the mercy of the others, if only for a few moments. They would surely do something the moment Tom turned away. And so the opportunity presented itself when Martha came asking him to visit Mrs. Cole before lunch, to talk about him starting school in the new year.

Thus Tom told Harry to get their lunch while he talked to Mrs. Cole. But as he watched Harry go off alone, clearly nervous, he decided to wait on talking to the hag until later, and went around to the back door instead, listening inside a small nook to the drama that was sure to unfold.

---

When Tom left Harry alone for the first time, sitting alone in the mess hall, his heart rate gradually went up, in equal measures, the longer he sat. First ten minutes. Then fifteen. Harry could no longer watch the clock as time seemed slowed, and the whispers came to him in various volumes:

“Where's Tom?”

“Why is he alone?”

“Should we do something while he's...?”

“No, idiot! Shh!”

One group of boys, however, approached Harry while he ate, and as they got closer, Harry realized they were the older boys he'd seen playing around the parks at night. Harry tried to stand, but before he could move, they were already gathering around his table, preventing him from leaving.

“So you're Tom's friend, right?” one boy with blonde hair said, taking Tom's seat opposite of him.

“So you're a friend of the freak? Does that make you one too?” they laughed when Harry failed to answer. The boy continued on in a mocking voice,



“Did mummy and daddy not like your freakishness and dropped you off here? Or are you more like Tom, who was born in filth like this?”

“Whoa, Billy! Calm down,” another boy, this one behind Harry, said smoothly, “Don’t be so mean to the new kid. He’s getting scared, right?”

The other boy sat down beside Harry, and casually wrapped his arm around his shoulder. Just when Harry thought the situation might ease up, the boy grabbed his juice and started pouring it all over his trousers.

“There, isn’t that nice?”

Everyone close by was laughing. Even a couple girls sitting further down the table laughed at Harry’s wet pants. He felt tears building up. He hadn’t been this humiliated since-

“Here, Dennis” the boy named Billy laughed with a cruel smile, “Maybe he needs a hat with that?”

But as Billy tried to grab the food and toss it all over Harry’s head, suddenly, Billy’s face turned red, as he struggled to lift the plate up. In frustration he grabbed Harry’s soup bowl, but it too appeared stuck to the tray, and no amount of physical force could get him to lift it.

The boy’s eyes then turned wide-eyed, and after glancing around, landed on Harry.

The other boy’s, still laughing at Harry’s situation, suddenly realized what was wrong, and backed up, along with Billy.

“You really are freak like him!” the boy said, so loud that nearly all of the children had stopped talking to watch,

“Your pants—!” Dennis gawked, staring down at Harry’s trousers, now dry as bone. As though Dennis hadn’t spilled a single drop on him.

“You’ll regret this!” Billy rasped out, while Harry sat stunned as they turned around and ran back outside.

Harry lowered his head as everyone continued to stare at him. He wished now more than ever that Tom would come back....

---

Tom was listening to the bullies with glee, from the moment they descended on his poor little Harry to the moment when something seemed to change. He frowned when suddenly there was a lapse in conversation, a quietness of sorts, before Billy shouted something Tom never expected to hear from the foul boy’s mouth.

“You really are a freak like him!”

He almost didn't believe it when they ran outside too, barely missing his hiding spot, in apparent fear.

What happened in there? What had Harry done?

Nothing about Harry was... *fearful*. Tom knew firsthand from the last few days that the boy was nearly innocent to a fault, so what was Billy screaming about being like Tom? And running away?

In no mood to ignore the situation any further, Tom slipped back inside and headed for the hall, seeing Harry sitting there sadly, staring at his food. He noticed the eyes of the other children followed him as Tom approached the table and sat down. He let the boy look at him for a few moments, before finally relenting and asking,

"What happened? I saw—"

However, just then, Mrs. Cole came bursting through the doors, pulling the arm of a blushing Dennis while Billy followed behind quickly, smiling from behind.

Her eyes swept the hall, every child looking away, before they met Tom's, and then curiously enough, slid over to Harry. It was clear what was wrong, by Harry's paling face and Dennis's soaked pants.

"Who did this?" she asked the hall loudly, but her eyes never left Tom and Harry.

"It was him, Mrs. Cole! The new boy!" Billy pushed forward, and smiled smugly at Tom while narrowing his eyes at Harry.

Tom knew by then what was actually going on; the boys were trying to get his special friend in trouble. There was no way Harry had actually done that to Dennis's pants. Harry was pale as a sheet as the Matron swooped down on him. She looked livid as she said,

"I knew there must be something more with *you*...to take to Tom so much..." she sneered, "Two weeks, no dinner. And every morning you're to help Martha with the laundry. You can start, I hope, with Mr. Bishop's trousers— and pray they're not ruined."

And with that, she marched away, leaving Harry in tears. Billy and Dennis walked past them with wicked smiles, and Tom, finally having enough of being left in the dark, used his powers to prod Harry for answers. He needed to know *now*.

"What. Happened." he said sternly, locking his eyes with Harry.

Harry shook as he responded,

"It wasn't my fault... m-my pants...and the food..."

"Yes?" He was becoming slightly frustrated when Harry continued to hesitate, opening and closing his mouth. Normally his powers worked so well— why wasn't it working now? He pushed a little harder,

“Billy ...he got mad because of my plate...it-it wouldn't move...and then the other one...my pants...but t-they aren't wet...anymore.” he mumbled the last part to himself.

Tom wasn't sure if he'd heard the boy right. It didn't make much sense. His plate wouldn't move? And his pants weren't wet? Tom quickly looked to Harry's drink, which was empty. He considered everything he had heard before he came inside, and everything that had happened after, but couldn't quite form the picture.

It almost sounded like....

---

Harry was still in a deep state of shock by the time him and Tom went to sleep. He went to bed hungry, of course, but it wasn't like Harry wasn't used to such treatment.

The day was very painful, and Harry wasn't entirely sure why. Dudley and his gang often got Harry into trouble by framing him for the things they did. His uncle would more often than not shove him into his cupboard without dinner. And he had chores everyday at the Dursley's. It was nothing new.

Harry guessed it was not so much to do with the punishments he had received so much as the fact that every child in the dining hall had witnessed the conflict play out... if anyone had wanted to be his friend before...Harry felt sure they wouldn't want to now.

By the time Harry fell into an uncertain sleep, he thought once more about his situation...and how his terrible luck had followed him, even to his new home...

## Chapter End Notes

Hope someone likes it. I'll be away again next week, so I'll update whenever I am back, or whenever I can.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

If Tom Riddle had ever once believed that Harry's mysterious incident with Billy was merely a first... it soon proved not to be his last. Over the course of the boy's punishment and into the following weeks after, strange things seemed to happen around Harry all the time, to which Tom found himself frequently annoyed as the incidents piled up.

It wasn't as though he was *jealous* of the boy, no, on the contrary, he was *angry* at him for making himself so *noticeable* around the orphanage! Before... the boy was barely a shadow behind Tom's looming presence. And now? Now Harry had gained enough of a reputation to rival Tom! And all on his own too...although of course, Tom was still the most feared of the two— everyone knew what would happen if they touched Tom's things. Especially....

But Tom wasn't a fool; he knew they were the same. And he knew why the boy was sent to him, now, and why they were supposedly compatible enough to be friends; it was the fact that they both had special powers! The problem, however, was that Harry had no idea how to *control* it. Unlike himself, who took pride in hiding and playing with his powers whenever he so wished, his new friend didn't appear to even acknowledge it, let alone learn the mechanisms of harnessing his gift.

And so, when December came upon them, and Harry had failed to get his third haircut in a single week (and Mrs. Cole had looked so very livid too, he noted with pleasure), Tom knew it was time to confront the boy about controlling his powers. Besides, he was also curious as to confirm something he had seen on the boy's forehead. He had never noticed it before, in all the weeks since his arrival, but the faint traces of a scar could be seen on occasion, and he wanted a closer look. So when it came time for bed one late evening, Tom quietly slid behind Harry, placed his hands on his back and pushed him down on the bed.

"Tom? W-What are you—!"

"Shh. It's okay Harry, I just need to confirm something...now don't move."

*Not that he could, even if he wanted to,* Tom thought smugly.

Tom used his powers to hold the boy down as he climbed on top. His eyes were wide and he was about to protest when Tom quickly smothered his yell and pulled his bangs apart in a sudden eagerness.

There, marred across his skin, was the most peculiar scar Tom had ever seen. It looked like a lightning bolt, jagged and red, old and yet...new and Tom felt strange, looking at it closely now. For some reason, he felt compelled towards it. Like he wanted to...to *touch* it.

Tom held his breath, and Harry looked scared below him with his eyes filled with confusion, but he touched it anyways as a powerful surge of *something* twisted into his very being. His fingers felt stuck to the scar, and he shook as an onslaught of sensations soared into him; he felt at once truly alive, whole and complete, everything mixing together at once and still—! A manic grin started to form on his face, laughter bubbling up before he even knew what was happening. He could feel everything, he could see the past, the future, playing within his mind, but it was too hard to grasp, and it wasn't enough, he wanted more he—!

"T-Tom...stop...stop!" Harry's weak struggles brought him back to the present. Harry turned his head away sharply, and Tom's hand was jerked away from his forehead; he was still breathing heavily, though, from that state of pure bliss, the intensity of the moment slowly easing with time.

"W-what was that?" Harry cried out in exhaustion. Tom looked down at his friend. Had the boy had experienced it too?

"W-Where did you get that scar?" Tom asked instead, still entranced by the mere thought of it.

"I got it... when my parents died...my relatives didn't like it though...they said it was ugly..."

Ugly? It was surely the most powerful, beautiful thing he had ever—!

"That's good. Keep it hidden, Harry. You wouldn't want the others to see it and make fun of it too, would you?"

Harry shook his head and quickly covered the scar once again. Tom smiled and rolled off him, releasing his hold.

It was one of the foulest lies that had ever passed his lips, but Tom did not want anyone else to look at the scar, let alone *touch* it, to experience whatever *he* felt. No, if Harry believed it was ugly, then he would be less inclined to show it off. The scar was his, just as Harry was his. No one but Tom was allowed to touch it and know about its power. He didn't know what had happened, but for one blissful moment, he felt certain he could accomplish anything. It felt as though he had been... complete...as if he'd never known how empty he was before.

The feeling had been so intense he had been on the verge of laughing hysterically, and his thoughts of Harry only increased in his need to keep the boy close. The strangest part, though, as Tom confirmed when he and Harry silently went to sleep afterwards, was that he could *still* feel the tingling effects deep inside of him; whatever it was, it was still present, only dimmer; he could even sense Harry's presence across the room, if he concentrated hard enough. He would test it out more in the future, of course, but he was certain that something happened when he had touched the boy's scar... and whatever that something was...it now connected them. Tom did not regret it, nor did he want these feelings to end. Instead he wanted more, and he relished in the idea of him and his granted friend being tied together forever. Besides, wasn't that how things were supposed to be?

---

When Amy had first told Harry, however briefly, about Tom's personality and the fears of the other children, Harry hadn't really much time to think about it, let alone consider it with any amount of truth. Tom had been nice to Harry, after all, and considering he was his only friend in the orphanage, and his only roommate, it was nice to have the taller boy stay by his side. But still, Amy's words had somehow gotten into the back of his head, and every time he was with Tom, he found himself unconsciously watching him, trying to see what Amy and everyone else saw too.

He didn't see it, at least, not at first. But then suddenly he was watching everything Tom did, recounting various things throughout each day even as he went to sleep. And when his puzzlement slowly began to form a picture, it was like he was seeing the older boy for the very first time, noticing his manipulations to get what he wanted, to the outright lies he told the others with unassumingly dark threats.

*But aren't you scared of him? Do you know what he can do?*

But still, Harry hadn't understood this...not until he came upon a scene he'd much rather forget. Harry had gone out with Martha to buy him a pair of glasses, that day, and when Harry had returned and looked for Tom out in the yard, what he had found...

*"S-S-Stop! TOM!" Billy screamed, but the sound was slightly muffled, the boy rolling on the grass behind a small shed in the dark corner of the field, his face scrunched up in pain as he screamed so quietly, that it was truly frightening to hear such an unnatural sound come from his lips. A few other children scattered around to watch at a distance, but otherwise, no one interfered.*

*Harry's heart had stopped, and he fled behind the nearest tree before anyone noticed him.*

*"Do you know what I want you to do, Billy?"*

*"Yes! Just stop! "the older boy cried, his eyes rolling back from some invisible pain. Harry watched in a terrifying moment when Tom lifted his hand, and a sizable brick came floating over to where he stood. How...?"*

*"Say it! Say what I want you to do!" Tom yelled, so forcefully that even Harry, standing at a distance, flinched.*

*"S-Stay away...Stay away from Peters! I understand! Just stop! Please!"*

*Harry's heartbeat was erratic, thumping wildly in his chest.*

*The brick fell from Tom's hand with a loud thud, and soon enough, footsteps came closer, and Harry quickly ducked under a small bush. Tom didn't see him when he headed back inside. Billy got up at last and struggled to walk back to the doors. The other children averted their eyes, and Billy glared at them all as he too went back inside the building...*

Yes, Harry wished he could forget the Tom from that day, but he couldn't. So he hid behind his new glasses, unsure of himself, wishing away the memories and pretending that everything was alright between them. That Tom *hadn't* hurt and humiliated the older boy, even if it was Billy... that Tom *wasn't* the cruel child he'd seen with a brick in his hand...

But then one night, Tom had held him down to the bed, using his strange ability to hold him again, pressing a finger against his scar. He couldn't explain it, but the sensation of Tom touching his scar was pure joy, like they were finally connected and he didn't want Tom to let go... but then Tom's power was shaking him so hard, and he was struggling to breathe, his limbs stiff and so he jerked his head away, even through all of those wonderful feelings when he saw the strangest grin spread over Tom's face, his eyes wide and exploring...

That look, more than anything else, had scared Harry to the point where he wanted him off.

"T-Tom...stop...s-stop!" he yelled and pushed, something inside of him breaking at Tom's hold over him.

"W-what was that?" he cried, while Tom asked, slightly strained,

"W-Where did you get that scar?"

---

Harry had laid awake that night, unable to sleep, thinking over everything that had happened to him at the orphanage. The other children stayed away from him now, just like they did with Tom...but it wasn't like it *his* fault that strange things kept happening around him...was it? And he couldn't explain them, either; Mrs. Cole had all but given up on getting his hair cut when it just kept growing back. But Harry had seen Tom float a brick into his hand... that day, as if it were so *easy*, as though he could actually harness... as though Tom could actually *control*...?

It was something of a revelation when Harry decided that he wasn't going to be like his old self anymore. He wasn't going to be the one who would always be Dudley's punching bag, or Aunt Petunia's personal slave. He wasn't going to let anyone, including Tom, push him into doing things he didn't want to do...not anymore. Not ever again.

And Harry knew what he had to do, now that he thought about it. He needed to decide on his feelings for Tom, and where they stood as friends. After all, they had never once said they were friends, it was just something they had both come to expect. He needed to talk to Tom about the strange things... he needed to talk about their friendship, and although he was scared to admit it...he needed to confront Tom over what he had done to Billy....

sorry this is late, I hope someone likes it, I'll update whenever I can :)



# Chapter 6

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next day, even before the sun was fully up, Tom found himself dragging little Harry down to the old shed in the fields surrounding the orphanage. Here, Tom would show the boy his powers. Here, he would tell him his secrets, and then teach the boy how to control his own gifts too—it was a gamble, yes, to trust Harry so much with his secrets...and so early into their relationship too. But alas, his Harry could not continue going like he was, gathering so much attention—not merely for his own sake, but for Tom's as well; he would *not* be sent to the doctor's house. Tom was *not* crazy.

Harry, for his part, was unusually quiet that morning on their way outside. Tom attributed it to nothing too important and focused instead on his growing excitement as they traveled through the snow—he could still feel the effects of whatever had happened when he touched the boy's scar, and although the strange feelings lingered on the edge of his mind, even now, he discovered quickly that he could use this new connection to keep track of the boy whenever he wasn't around. It was good, in a way, but Tom was desperate to find out if it worked in the other direction too—it was beneficial for Tom, but he didn't want Harry knowing where he was or what *he* was up to each and every day. He had the feeling the boy wouldn't appreciate what he usually did to keep the other orphans to themselves.

Soon enough, they both stopped in front of the shed. Tom hadn't been inside for quite a while, at least not since Harry arrived. He silently hoped his pet was still there, feeding off the occasional mouse or two. It had snowed heavily in the past few days, and although he wasn't specifically worried, Tom usually checked in on her at least once a week. He had been absent for a while, then.

"W-What are we doing here, Tom", Harry shivered in the cold. The smaller boy was wrapped up in his winter clothes, but it still wasn't enough to keep the wind completely out.

"I already told you," Tom said, opening the door, "We're here because I have something to show you." But when Harry didn't immediately go inside, he sighed,

"It's nothing that will hurt you. Now, come on", Tom said, leading the way inside.

"*Shala*", he hissed quietly, hoping his snake was still where he'd left her. Harry had just closed the door against the cold when the little red snake popped her head out of the dark wood, hissing in displeasure at Tom for waking her up.

"*I hope you brought me something good,*" she slithered out into the open.

"*Of course,*" Tom smiled, and pulled a bit of old sausage he had smuggled out of breakfast. He always brought her some sort of gift, or at least, to bribe her into being well behaved.

*“Who’s this?” she tasted the air, “I smell one other.”*

Tom looked around to where Harry was now standing by the door, still shivering and not at all aware of what Tom was doing. He bent down and, shielding his mouth from view, whispered,

*“That’s Harry. He’s my special friend. Go over and greet him, will you? Just don’t scare him quite yet, I want to show him how we speak first.”*

Shala nodded and slowly crept up to the smaller boy.

“T-T-Tom?” Harry chattered through the dark, “Where are you?”

“Over here—”

“I can’t see— ah!” Tom watched as Harry tripped over his shoes and went tumbling to the floor. His glasses fell off in the process, but just as Harry was about to reach for them, he watched as Shala intercepted,

*“Hello there, special friend,”*

*“W-Who are you?”*

And with three small hisses, all thoughts stopped for Tom.

---

*“W-Who are you?”* Harry asked, scared that there was someone else here besides Tom. But then his vision focused, and he yelped when the tiny snake in front of him spoke.

*“My name is Shala. I’m Tom’s favorite snake.”*

*“S-Snake?”*

*“Shala, come here!”* Harry heard Tom yell suddenly, although Harry couldn’t quite understand why. Once he put on his glasses, Harry saw Tom slowly approach him, with the small red snake wrapped around his fingers. Was it possible for snakes to talk? How? Or was it a trick of Tom’s?

*“Harry,”* he looked up to see Tom standing over him, a small frown marring his features, *“Can you understand me?”*

“Of course I can understand you...” Harry said while getting up, a frown of his own forming as Tom looked split between excitement and uncertainty.

“What’s more important is that you have a talking snake!” he exclaimed wildly, his eyes wide, watching the little serpent in quiet fascination.

*“I have a name, you know.”*

*"She spoke again!"*

Tom, who was watching Harry closely, said,

"It's not the snake that's speaking, Harry. It's you. You can understand and speak the snake's language."

"Language? But I'm speaking English...so how—"

*"Listen to my voice. Do you hear the difference?"*

Harry listened hard, and now that he was looking for it, he heard Tom emitting tiny hisses from his mouth. It was strange, and Harry couldn't quite grasp how it was even possible. And he questioned Tom so.

"It's because we're special Harry," Tom said, a strange gleam in his eyes, "We're different from the rest of them, and now we have proof. We can do things others can't, we can do anything... because we're friends, right?"

Harry looked away as Tom said this, flinching inside as he remembered his resolve from earlier. He had to talk to Tom. About their friendship. About what he had done to Billy... about the strange things they could do, what had happened between them last night and—

---

Tom Riddle did not know what to do. His plans had abruptly stopped when Harry had spoken to Shala. He wasn't expecting it. Was it because of their connection? And why did they have so much in common? But then the answer came to him, and a wave of affection brushed past Tom's typically cold heart. It was *because* Harry was Tom's special friend. The one person he had brought to him with his powers, the only one even *capable* of being his friend—the fact that Harry could also speak to snakes was simply another reason why Harry belonged to him. Harry was truly suited for him in every way—like *his* friend should be.

Tom watched the boy in front of him, his usual green eyes now obscured behind his glasses, hiding most of his expression. But Tom could guess what it was. His own expression had been much the same, when he had first discovered he could speak to snakes.

"Because we're special Harry," he said, and it was true. He was special. *They* were special.

"We're different from the rest of them," Tom continued, his smile growing with anticipation, "and now we have proof. We can do things others can't, we can do anything...because we're friends, right?"

"R-Right..."

sorry this is late, I hope I can update once more before the weekend is over, I can only write this on the weekends right now, that's why.

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tom knew Harry was desperate to say something to him over the course of the next few days. The fact that Harry could speak to snakes had pleased him more than he thought it would, and every chance he got Tom found himself speaking in their hidden tongue, trying to teach the boy the differences, as well as scare off the other orphans. So far, it was working very well indeed. They had also spent a lot of time trying to hone Harry's gift—the boy wasn't easy to convince he had powers like Tom, but after a day spent trying to make things float, Harry relented at last, after a disastrous attempt to make his fork float resulted in it smacking the boy in the face. Tom would have laughed if it didn't make him appear silly. He had appearances to keep up, after all.

But even through it all, Tom was aware that something was bothering the boy, with his face so innocently worried, a near constant frown behind those spectacles that Tom found it quite cute, and if not a little amusing. So, naturally, there was only one solution: to continue pretending not to notice Harry's little dilemma. Instead, Tom decided to wait until the boy crumpled under the pressure of his own, blissful ignorance.

Yes, it was quite fun, in a way, to poke and prod the younger boy, to ask him questions ("Is something wrong?") and whenever Harry was about to say something, Tom would conveniently turn the conversation elsewhere, letting the boy sag under the growing pressure. He had no idea what troubling Harry was so much, but it was humorous to watch him struggle, and Tom would have prolonged the entire conversation if only to watch Harry's silent battle of wills.

Sadly, by the end of the fourth day, the boy finally cracked. They were standing outside their room when Harry literally shouted what had been bothering him for days. Tom would have let him shout, too, if they hadn't been in the entirely wrong area to do so.

"Tom, I know what you did to Billy! And—!"

Well, of course Tom didn't let Harry finish that sentence before he was shoving him into their room, closing the door with a sharp snap.

Harry faltered then, but the boy seemed determined to go on, to get everything off his chest, even despite Tom's unnerving silence in the room.

"I saw what you did Tom...a-and it was wrong... to hurt him like that...and I-I don't know... if we can be friends..." Harry said quietly, looking away this time, "if you keep on doing bad things ...Tom."

Thus Tom simply stood there, his expression perfectly stony against the raging turmoil inside.

*Can't be friends?* Tom almost laughed. What kind of twisted game fate playing at? His powers had *granted* him a friend, a person snatched away from their previous life and given specifically to Tom, *his*, and now, just when he was happy with the way things were going, his friend doesn't want to be friends if Tom doesn't act better? And act better to whom? *Billy*?

Forcing himself to swallow was much harder in action. It would seem his gift had granted him a friend, yes, but it was up to Tom to keep it that way. *So be it*. Tom never could resist a challenge, and even though the boy had been quiet thus far, he knew there was more behind those green eyes and glasses than meek compliance.

"Alright." Tom said, frowning outwards but internally gleeful. This was the perfect way to get Harry to stay with him, and to mend whatever frustration was getting in the way of Harry's thoughts.

The boy looked so dumbfounded by his statement, Tom couldn't help a smirk from forming.

"W-What?" he was clearly not expecting Tom to agree so fast.

"I'll stop tormenting Billy. But first..."

"But what?"

Here Tom hesitated, letting his face morph into a blend of deep regret and sadness, just enough to lure the boy in.

"You'll need to do something for me first, Harry. It's only fair. I'll stop being mean to Billy, and you'll do me a favor in return. Agreed?"

Harry looked doubtful, his little face pinched in thought.

"Okay..." he finally agreed, "But what do you want me to do?"

"Don't worry, Harry. I'll think of something, sooner or later."

In fact, it would be much, much later. If Tom had his way, he was planning to let this tiny favor hang over Harry's head for as long as it could last. Tom was quite happy to let this particular request tie them together for however many years it took to make Harry stay by his side. And Tom didn't mind leaving Billy alone either, because he knew he could do other things to torment the older boy without even touching a hair on his precious little head. He smiled as he changed into his pajamas, getting ready for bed.

It seemed Harry was not quite done with his questions, though, for just when Tom was about to shut his eyes, Harry called to him softly in the dark,

"Tom?"

"Yes?"

“D-Did my aunt and uncle really abandon me here...? I'm sorry...I-I just keep thinking about it....”

Tom stiffened at the question. Why was he asking this, out of the blue? His heart raced and he answered rather harshly,

“Of course they abandoned you, why else would you be here? Now go to sleep, we still have to practice tomorrow.”

“Okay. Goodnight, Tom....”

---

While Harry fell to sleep, Tom was now wide awake, still thinking over the question his granted friend just asked.

Why did he feel so nervous? It was unlike him, and especially over a lie he had already told the boy. It was a stupid question. The boy was clearly still sad about his abandonment in the orphanage. And here Tom thought he had gotten over it....

Whatever it was, Tom knew he would have to get a hold of himself in the future. If Harry ever asked him again, about how he had come here, Tom would have to be more prepared. How would Harry react if he ever found out the truth?

Closing his eyes once more, Tom vowed that, no matter what, Harry could never find out that Tom was the one who had brought him here. It was quite possibly his only weakness, the one hole in Tom's formidable web of lies, the one lie that Tom felt sure Harry may never forgive. And Tom would never allow Harry to leave him. Harry was *his* friend, and his alone.

When Tom finally slept that night, his fingers clenched tightly into his pillow with the thought of those bright green eyes turning against him. No, Harry could never find out.

Never....

---

## Chapter End Notes

thanks for all the comments, I plan on having a time skip next chapter...

# Chapter 8

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

2 years later...

“Mrs. Cole! Mrs. Cole! Are we really going to the beach?”

“For the last time Billy, *yes*, we are going to the beach. And *no*, you cannot bring that infernal rabbit with you. Put it back upstairs.”

Tom watched idly from the bus window as Billy Stubbs raced back inside, presumably to put his stupidly large rabbit back into its cage. Billy was twelve, and last year he had somehow acquired a pet rabbit; the thing was hideous, in Tom’s opinion, and the older boy tried to take it wherever he went, like it was some godforsaken prize that nobody could touch.

In two years time, Tom Riddle was clearly marked on the path of growing into a very handsome young man—at the age of nine, he now sat taller than his peers, his hair was never out of place, and all the girls fawned over his aristocratic features.

Harry, on the other hand...

“Tom! What do you think we’ll find?” Harry whispered beside him, hardly able to contain his excitement about the day ahead. Ever since Mrs. Cole had announced a seaside trip to the beach, the boy had fantasized nonstop about finding some sort of treasure and exploring the area; Tom held no such interest, but if his special friend wanted this, he was willing to spend some time out of the day to entertain him.

Tom looked over the boy and sighed— his hair was still messy, no matter how many times Tom had tried to comb it. Harry was small for his age too, and the meagre rations at Wool’s was hardly enough to keep the boy growing. Tom had even stolen food for the boy on occasion, but it seemed that too was not enough.

“I don’t know. Rocks?” Tom answered the question sarcastically, which made Harry pout.

For two years now, Tom had kept Harry close to him, closer than he had ever anticipated the boy to be. Tom had also kept his promise to Harry, after two years, and had not done anything to Billy Stubbs ever since.

But just because Tom did not lift a finger to harm the boy *specifically*, didn’t mean he minded setting his pet snake upon the boy at night, or making hot soup fall all over his lap. To his credit, even Harry didn’t notice anything odd, and had fallen happily back into their strange routine of friendship. As for Billy, he soon learned not to touch Tom’s things after a particularly nasty fall down the stairs.



Harry had also learned some moderate control over his powers, although the boy was still lacking in certain areas. Namely, Tom had wanted to teach Harry the importance of *power*, and for the boy to use his powers like Tom did. But Harry only ever liked to do *innocent* things with his gift, like make the flowers bloom or float his playing ball back to him. No matter what harsh things Tom had tried to teach him, no matter the lessons on the cold truth of reality, Harry was far too kind for his own good.

It made Tom wonder, on more than one occasion, just how they were connected; for all the things Tom enjoyed, like hurting the weak, or stomping the life out of the local bird population, Harry was almost his perfect contrast— Harry, with his love for all things, wouldn't even kill a fly.

Besides this, their strange connection had also grown, if only on Tom's part—whenever Tom was certain that Harry was asleep, he would lay down beside him and caress his scar. It was an undeniably strange feeling, like pleasant, electric currents racing through his body at the touch, connecting him more and more to Harry; Tom had no idea if Harry felt it too, but he was certain the boy felt *something* if his tiny whimpers and increased breathing were anything to go by....

---

An hour later, they arrived at their destination. Tom smirked when Harry's immediate reaction to the 'beach' was overwhelming disappointment. Of course, who wouldn't be? There was hardly any sand; most of the beach was filled with jagged rocks and cold, dead grass. The wind had picked up by now, and the sun hid behind the clouds, meaning the water would be freezing. Any hopes the boy had of making sandcastles and sitting in the sun were quickly dashed.

"Well, children, go out and play. Mrs. Cole and I will be over here." Martha said, once they all piled out of the bus.

"And don't go too far." the stern woman added, "If I catch anyone out of bounds, they are to do twice the number of chores for the next month. Understood?"

No one needed to be told twice. Tom and Harry quickly walked down to the shore, and soon enough everyone from the orphanage was playing on one side of the beach, while Tom and Harry sat far away on the other.

"So what do you want to do?" Harry asked, used to their treatment by the other orphans, "I don't think we're going to find anything here..." he kicked at the available sand with a gloomy face.

"I suppose ..." Tom deliberately trailed off, knowing when to stop to catch Harry's interest. Predictably, the smaller boy looked up hopefully— and didn't Tom just love it, when Harry worshiped him so?

"I suppose we could go looking for treasure. Is that not what you wanted to do?"

“Yes, but I don’t see anything—”

“I mean over there.” Tom pointed down the shoreline, away from the group and down to where the rocks looked large and infinitely more dangerous.

“But we can’t go down there! Mrs. Cole said...and we’ll trip or—!”

“We’ll use our powers, isn’t it obvious? We won’t fall.”

When Harry still looked doubtful, Tom sighed and held out his hand;

“Come Harry, don’t you trust me?” he said,

And it was such a fragile moment in time, such an innocent display of trust that Tom would always remember the second when Harry smiled, then slowly reached out and took his hand. He would remember how Harry’s messy hair had whipped in the wind, how the boy’s glasses fogged with embarrassment at holding hands on a beach. He would always remember climbing the rocks, slowly on uneven feet, and even finding a wonderful cave that took away his very breath.

He would remember the way the light hit Harry’s eyes, green upon green, and how Tom thought he looked beautiful in the backdrop of the lake.

Yes, Tom would remember that day as the day his feelings changed...and because the next time they went to the beach, Tom would make a near fatal mistake...and Harry would pay the price....

## Chapter End Notes

sorry for the waiting, here is another chapter :)

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Not for the first time, Tom wondered about his special friend's past. It wasn't as though the boy was exactly forthcoming with information about his old home. At times, Tom had to pry for little facts here and there, on their way to school, or in an idle chat before bed. But it was always very vague, and Tom had never put too much thought into Harry's past besides; now that he was with Tom, in his opinion, the boy's past did not matter too much.

But still Harry's earlier life kept creeping up on Tom unexpectedly, so much so that Tom would have grown irritated if the boy's claims had not been so ridiculous. When Harry had first come to him, all those years ago, Tom remembered quite well how Harry would make strange comments about perfectly ordinary things. Such as other people's clothes, or how all the cars looked funny to him. But as time passed, Harry slowly stopped commenting on these things. And besides, Harry was nearing ten years old, and in Tom's opinion, much too old to be having fantasies about impossible things (like it was *clearly* impossible for one family to own three televisions, no matter what the boy said).

Now, Tom had put up with Harry's strange quirks for years, but one day nearing Christmas, Harry's imagination went one step too far, infringing on Tom's reputation in school. Harry was typically quiet in class, which suited him just fine— but the first time Harry decided to raise his hand, was the day he became the laughingstock of the school. And all because of some silly fantasy the boy had in his head.

“Yes Harry?” the teacher prompted and looked quite eager to have the boy asking questions. Even Tom was intrigued as to what he would say.

But then he uttered something so absurd that Tom inwardly groaned, because he knew what was coming.

“Haven't people already been to the moon?”

And the class had burst into unreserved laughter. Even the teacher looked bewildered, quickly giving the boy a resolute “no”, before trying to calm the class.

“But I remember...” Harry started, before Tom kicked the boy from underneath his chair. When the laughter died down, the teacher evidently gave Harry a detention for causing trouble in class, and his friend looked about ready to cry.

And Tom thought that was the end of it. But no. Two days later, Tom had clearly underestimated his friend's stubbornness. Two days, and Harry was still trying to convince Tom of this wild theory.

“People have already been to the moon, Tom! I've read about it! I've *seen* it!” Harry claimed for the umpteenth time.

“And where did you see it again? Oh right, it must have been on one of your numerous televisions.”

“Yes! I mean no! I mean—Tooom!” Harry yelled in frustration, his voice growing into a whine that made Tom growl. He knew what the boy was doing. Whenever Harry was upset, Tom would always give in. *Always*. It was a weak point Tom had thought to get rid of, but whenever he tried to do so, he would get thoughts that perhaps he didn’t want to. Now, however...

“Harry.” Tom narrowed his eyes in warning, pushing his friend who had attached to his arm onto the bed,

“Tom.” Harry returned, failing to look even remotely like a threat because he was hanging upside down.

He sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. Where did he go wrong? No, wait, *he* didn’t go wrong. It was surely Harry...the boy was a bubbling ball of energy that nobody, not even Tom, could contain. It wasn’t *his* fault. Because Tom was perfect.

“Harry,” he warned again, this time completely serious, “No humans have ever gone to the moon, and no one is *ever* going to the moon. Accept the facts.”

Harry’s smile slipped away, and with a cry he fell down from his perch on the bed. The lighthearted mood turned sour when Harry got up, adjusting his glasses stiffly.

“Fine,” he grumbled, “But the next time you want me to believe in you, when everyone else doesn’t, don’t count on it.”

And with a lasting look that made Tom’s heart stop, Harry ran out of the room before he could say anything. He didn’t know why, but for once, Tom did not follow.

---

Harry was in tears by the time he ran into Amy. He tried to push past her in the hallway, but she timidly grabbed his arm just as he was about to escape.

“H-Harry? What’s wrong?” she whispered, then more quietly, “Was it...Tom?” she asked, her eyes wide, looking both ways to see if the other was around. Perhaps it was his mood, or perhaps it was because Harry was alone for once, but at her words he broke down crying, crumpling into a heap on the floor. And Amy was right beside him, worried and scared.

He knew the entire situation was stupid. It wasn’t even that he was mad at Tom for not believing him. He was just so confused, and he wanted Tom to understand. And he was so tired of Tom being— well, what? *Tom*?

Harry loved his friend. Without him, Harry surely would have been bullied by the older children; he would have been *that* boy again, that strange, too baggy clothes Harry that everyone always hated. Tom protected him, even if he was cruel in his ways. Tom was his

friend, his first friend in his life, and Harry knew Tom well enough to know that his friend cared, even if he rarely showed it.

No, he was just tired of how Tom would never listen to him. How Tom was always right, and Harry was always wrong. And the way he treated Harry too, as if no one else was allowed to talk to him! For two years Harry had put up with only playing and talking with Tom...he had put up with all the fear and hatred from the other orphans, but he desperately wanted more; he would always watch the other kids with envious eyes, wanting to play with them, but not wanting to anger Tom as well. Harry didn't want to be caged, in a box, with only Tom to know for the rest of his life. He wanted to see the world someday, and that meant seeing other people too.

Truthfully, Harry just wanted someone else he could confide in at times, someone *other* than Tom, for once. And sitting there on the floor, crying, with Amy slowly leading him back to her room, he thought maybe, just maybe, she could be his friend too....

## Chapter End Notes

sorry this is so late, I was busy, hope you like, and I hope to get the orphanage time over soon, then a bit of a time skip to start at Hogwarts.

## Chapter 10

If Tom was suspicious over his friend's behavior, he didn't show it. When Harry returned after their small fight, the boy had simply laid down to sleep with a mumbled 'sorry' into his pillow before drifting off. But he had seen Harry's eyes, red and swollen behind his glasses, which meant tears had been spilled, and where exactly did Harry go for the nearly two hours since Tom had left him alone?

Perhaps, if it were just that, Tom would have let the matter slide, but in the following days after Harry began a certain...routine, where he would slip behind Tom's ever watchful eye with some pathetic enough excuse like the bathroom or a sudden need for fresh air.

At first, Tom had decided to keep matters civilized, letting his special friend do whatever it was that was so important that he needed to deceive Tom in order to do it. But he wasn't a fool, and after several more days of Harry's lame excuses, he spotted the little liar through the upstairs window, out in the fields playing ball with some of the other children.

It wasn't as though he didn't suspect it. He *knew* the boy was going *somewhere*... but where, exactly, had always curiously left his mind when he thought upon it.

But playing with the other orphans? The very same orphans who scorned Tom for his freakishness, who scorned *Harry* for that very same reason...? How did it happen? *When* did it happen?

Now, jealousy wasn't an emotion Tom regularly felt; why get jealous when Tom could simply take whatever it was that he wanted? But seeing *his* special friend smiling and laughing with someone else, and now that he saw, with that blonde bimbo Amy, the emotion ripped through his chest like a beast, tore away at his insides and every spike and plunge of jealousy's vicious hand left his heart in a tangled heap of raw bitterness. And when the feeling finally abated, a terrible fury took its place, silent and deadly, where every laugh and smile the boy made was like a stab to an already open wound.

And wasn't it peculiar, to watch Harry play so freely, so openly, so passionately? And why, oh why, had he never seen that expression on his face before? Had Harry always been that happy? Had his smile always been that bright?

He waited for the boy to come back. He would deal with him then.

---

Harry decided not to tell Tom about Amy. After she found him crying in the hallway, and leading him back to her room, Harry had told her most (if not all) of his problems with Tom. And Amy had listened. He hadn't known how Amy would respond, and on some level, he didn't care— Harry had simply wanted to vent, and Amy listened to him all the way.

In the end, though, Harry had to beg Amy not to tell anyone, especially Tom, about their secret meeting. Because out of everything that could happen, he didn't want Tom to

misunderstand. He still liked Tom, in his own way, and he was still the first friend Harry ever had.

But then Amy had whispered to him on his way out the door,

“Hey Harry, do you want to play with us tomorrow?”

He couldn't refuse. Because just like that, Harry was accepted by someone other than Tom— and he found he quite liked the feeling. So Harry played ball with Amy the next day, telling Tom a small lie to go out by himself, playing in the fields behind the orphanage. Soon after, some of the other children noticed him, and he played with them too.

But Harry didn't forget about Tom. And after the fifth day of playing freely and having fun, he decided to tell Tom the truth.

He could never imagine it would go so spectacularly wrong.

---

Tom sat on his bed and waited. He read a book to pass the time, but he hardly turned a page. His thoughts turned more and more vicious the longer he waited for Harry to return.

If Tom pressed on his mind, he could feel Harry's turbulent emotions. It was strange. He didn't know how it was possible, but the more Tom touched Harry's scar the more connected they became.

Finally, *finally*, the boy opened the door. Tom could practically feel the confession oozing off of him. Harry was going to tell him the truth. Little did he know, it was far too late for that.

“Hi Harry. Did you have a good walk?” Tom decided he liked playing with his food before devouring it. He didn't look up from his book.

“Tom, I-I have something to tell you.” the boy began slowly, walking over to his bed and sitting down. Still Tom didn't give him the reassurance the boy desperately craved. The feelings of nervousness and anxiety were crashing over him like waves, but he coolly cut off the boy's feelings. It surprised him to have so much control over their connection, but he would dwell on it later. Clearly Harry still knew nothing about it.

Tom waited until Harry's breathing grew ragged, until his nerves shot high and still, Tom said nothing. Then the boy spoke,

“I-I haven't been going on walks... Tom. I—”

“Oh I know you haven't,” he cut him off, looking up sharply. “But it's alright Harry. Truly, it is.”

Tom put down his book and looked at his friend. Harry was twisting his fingers into knots, his round glasses pushed up to the bridge of his nose.

“R-Really?” the boy asked carefully, noting the tense way Tom spoke, “But aren’t you \_\_\_”

“I said it’s fine!” he spoke with a command in his voice, and Harry jumped, “If you want to play with the others, who am I to stop you?”

He walked slowly over to Harry, who was so startled by Tom’s apparent coolness he didn’t notice when Tom brushed his bangs aside and touched his scar.

“But aren’t...aren’t you m-mad at me?” Harry asked dazedly, tilting his head back with Tom’s gentle touch. As Tom continued to rub his fingers against the scar, he used his powers to lull Harry into a sleep. It was deceptively easy, given the way Harry typically relaxed when Tom touched his forehead at night. Soon, the boy collapsed against him, and Tom pushed Harry to rest against the pillow. He pulled the thin blanket over his special friend.

“Of course I’m mad, Harry. But don’t worry, you’re still my special friend. And I take care of my friends, even if they don’t always agree with it.”

The next morning, Amy Benson screamed.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Later on, Tom would vehemently deny any involvement in the killing of Billy Stubbs's rabbit. He would also deny that it had anything to do with Amy Benson, although the poor creature was found right outside her bedroom door, hanging precariously from the ceiling. It was impossible, he would say, and who could blame him?

But the rabbit certainly didn't hang itself, and when Tom was interrogated by a livid Mrs. Cole, he was gleeful to know that the girl was now having nightmares. In truth, Tom wasn't quite done with Benson yet. Threatening her was one thing, but the orphanage was planning another trip to the beach, and what better way to punish her than a remote, isolated area? It was perfect.

Harry, for his part, had slept through the entire ordeal. Tom had kept the boy asleep, and when questioned about his whereabouts, he simply told the staff that Harry wasn't feeling too well. Nobody pursued this further, and when Tom brought up food for the boy, he let Harry wake just enough to eat his meals drowsily and then forcibly moved him back to sleep once again. Besides, Tom didn't want to deal with Harry's silly moral codes at the moment, and especially not when he still had so much planned.

Yes, Tom would take Harry to the beach. He would punish Amy and anyone else who interfered. And then everything would be as it should....

---

Harry didn't know what had happened, but he missed three days. For three full days he was in a strange sort of coma, and nothing made sense during that time. He didn't dream, but if he did, it was always to the sensation of hands pulling him down into an infinite darkness. He vaguely remembered Tom feeding him, but whenever Harry tried to get up, Tom would push him back down, and Harry would fall asleep again.

The last thing he remembered was telling Tom about Amy. Now, now Billy's rabbit was dead, and Amy wouldn't talk to him. Wouldn't even look at him.

And Harry suspected Tom. No, he *knew* it was Tom. Tom didn't say anything about the rabbit when Harry woke up, merely told him that tomorrow they were going to the beach.

For the very first time, Harry didn't want to go to the beach.

---

While the orphanage was packing for another trip to the sea, Harry was too busy worrying about what the trip would actually bring. He had a bad feeling, and if Billy's rabbit was still alive, then maybe Harry would have felt better. But the rabbit was dead, and Amy

wasn't his friend anymore, and everyone was looking at him like *he* had killed the rabbit, not Tom.

Harry's anxiety was proven correct when Tom caught him by the wrist on their way to the bus and told Harry to follow. It was innocent enough, except when Harry didn't want to be anywhere near Tom, and yet he couldn't stop his feet from following the older boy anyway. Tom had used his powers, and Harry was compelled to follow.

"T-Tom" Harry whispered once they were seated, "What are you doing?"

"Listen Harry, because I'm only going to say this once." Tom said, his voice sounding cold and unusually tense, "You're my friend, and when everything is over today, you'll understand even more. So just be quiet and listen to what I say. I'm only telling you once."

And just like that, when Harry went to ask Tom what he meant, he lost his voice too. Whatever sound Harry tried to make, his voice was no longer working; taken by Tom, just like his movement.

He would have cried, but somehow, his tears wouldn't come. No matter how much he was screaming inside.

## Chapter End Notes

sorry for late chapter, but next time we'll get to the beach, and then the orphanage part will end soon, and hopefully Hogwarts will start :)

## Chapter 12

Harry was scared. Scared of not being able to move, scared of what the future would bring; scared of the way Tom was acting. The entire bus ride Harry had spent trying to break the hold Tom had over him—but by the time they got to the actual beach, Harry had no more energy left. His feet moved automatically, but Tom still grabbed Harry's hand to help him over the larger, more dangerous rocks.

The strangest thing was that Amy followed along behind, quiet just like Harry—it came with a sudden realization that she too was stuck in her body, moving to Tom's will, taking them to wherever Tom saw fit.

A little while into their journey, Harry saw that Dennis had followed Amy, and was huffing out of breath not too far behind.

"Amy! What are you doing!" he yelled, and then came struggling up the rocks, "Leave them! They're both freaks, just let them go!"

When Amy didn't answer and she kept moving, the Dennis boy kept following.

Harry sucked in a breath when he realized where Tom was leading them to—the cave. The special cave both he and Tom had found together the last time they were here.

It pained him that Tom was ruining their special cave for—what, exactly? Harry wasn't sure, even at this point, what Tom had planned once they reached it. Waves of anxiety crashed over him as his feet moved onward and onward, no matter how much Tom rubbed his hand over Harry's, or whispered soothing words, trying to ease him into a false sense of calm. It was like watching a storm, the way the sky would build up with clouds before anything truly happened. And Harry could only watch as it all unfolded.

By the time they reached the cave, Harry was flushed and worn. Amy looked no better, her pigtails all askew and her cheeks a dark pink from exhaustion. Dennis came crawling up inside moments later, heaving and out of breath. Tom Riddle looked just like he always did, with the exception of his eyes. His eyes were alight, and Harry could honestly say, even despite all the times Tom had been cruel in the past, his eyes had never looked so dangerous and threatening.

Tom pushed Harry against the far wall and told him to stay, a task that was nearly impossible to fight against with the overwhelming influence of Tom's powers. Amy was brought to her knees, while she cried in silence. Dennis was looking on in confusion, before Tom turned his attention to him.

"Would you like to join her? I don't see a point in letting you go now. Besides, I'd like to see how far my powers can reach."

And just like that, with a shout of surprise, Dennis walked forward and collapsed to his knees in front of Tom, terror written all over his face.

“S-stop it T-Tom ...” Harry whispered, finally breaking free of the silence Tom had put over him. Tom didn’t hear, and in turn, Harry couldn’t hear the words Tom was saying, softly and whispered in Amy’s ear. Then, the girl was screaming, twisting into angles Harry didn’t even think possible, and her voice echoed all around the cave, so loud and piercing, he was sure that Amy was dying the longer she screamed.

Something in Harry snapped at that, and his heart gave a powerful lurch as his body broke free of Tom’s command. He felt something surround him, a crackling of electric fire as he shouted,

“STOP IT TOM!”

And Harry ran into Tom, pushing him hard to the ground.

The ensuing fight lasted all but three seconds as Tom gave a great shout and threw Harry off and against the wall; and with a resounding crack, his head hit the rock, and Harry knew no more.

---

Tom didn’t know what he had done until he had done it. One moment he had been punishing Benson, the girl screaming herself hoarse, and the next moment Harry was on the ground, bleeding profusely from the head.

Any further thoughts of torturing flew from his mind. In fact, Tom was quite certain his heart had stopped. When Harry didn’t move, even twitch, a scream, a painful, agonizing sound, clawed its way through his throat as he tore himself over to where Harry lay.

It didn’t look good. From a distance, Tom could pretend that the wound didn’t exist. Up close, Harry’s hair was wet, the blood was flowing fast, and Tom didn’t know how to stop it.

For the first time in his life, Tom was scared. Death had always been his biggest fear, but now that it crept so close, now that Harry was in imminent danger, everything was put into perspective of how fragile their lives truly were. His thoughts became a jumbled mess, and the longer the seconds ticked by, seconds that he knew were precious, his mind ceased to form any coherent thought.

*He couldn’t die, couldn’t die, couldn’t die—*

Would his powers even work? He had never healed *anything* before, so how could he do it now? What if he failed? What if Harry *died*? What if—

*No. No! It wasn’t supposed to be like this. This wasn’t supposed to happen.*

Movement out of the corner of his eye caught his attention, and the Dennis boy was creeping slowly out of the cave. Benson still lay on the ground, sobbing.

Damn it! Damn it! He didn't have time to deal with them. Harry needed his help. He closed his eyes against his torrent of thoughts, and wished, more than he had ever wished for anything before, for Harry to heal. He focused so strongly, he didn't notice how Dennis started choking on the air when he came too close, or the oppressive feeling that descended upon the cave like a dark cloud originating from Tom's form.

Heal, heal, heal, *heal*....

After a particularly strong burst of power surged through him, he slowly opened his eyes, only to find himself and Harry back on the beach, in sight of Mrs. Cole and the other orphanage children.

He noted that his powers had healed the wound somewhat, and Harry wasn't bleeding as openly as before. Still, Harry needed professional help, and although Tom was loathe to admit it, he couldn't heal Harry on his own.

He called over the Matron, and soon enough there was a flurry of panic and activity as Tom told the story of how Harry had tripped and hit his head on the rocks. She scolded Tom, of course, but he didn't care.

There was another small panic as the staff realized both Amy and Dennis were missing, but after a few more minutes of waiting they spotted them among the crowd, both children as white as a sheet. And no matter how many times Mrs. Cole tried to get them to speak, they wouldn't say a word.

After an agonizing journey back, with Harry's head wrapped in a tight cloth, they took the boy to the hospital as soon as they got back.

Mrs. Cole assured him that Harry would be fine with proper treatment and sent Tom back to his room.

That night, Tom went to bed alone, much in thought.

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

While Harry was in the hospital, a strange man came to meet with Tom one cold afternoon. He wore the most ridiculous clothes Tom had ever seen, but by the time the man lit his wardrobe on fire, he knew it was real. *Magic* was real. And other, magical people existed too. He was eager, perhaps, even too eager to learn more. More knowledge. More magic. More *power*. Yes, Tom knew he was powerful, and if the strange looks the old man had given him before he had departed, Tom realized he had shown too much. Told the professor too much of his background and abilities. It was a foolish mistake, and one that Tom would likely have to redeem for himself once he entered this school called Hogwarts.

Tom had mentioned Harry too, and Dumbledore had told Tom he would visit him on his way back. He had no idea if his Harry would be let into this special school too, but Tom wouldn't allow it any other way. He finally understood what connected them: magic was their bond, and magic was what allowed Harry to travel to Tom in the first place. But the question remained: why? Why had Harry been chosen out of all other candidates? If Dumbledore was right, there was a whole world of 'special', magical people to choose from. Why was Harry chosen to be his friend?

Somehow, somewhere along the line, the word became sour in his mouth, like acid on his tongue. Harry was more than a friend. He was Tom's, and that automatically meant he was more than special. The term was so ordinary too, wasn't it? 'Friend' hardly described their relationship anymore. Not since—

Another, more important thought worried Tom, and it frightened him so badly that some nights he could barely sleep: would Harry despise him for what he had done? He had almost killed him, and Tom had barely kept him alive...if not for his magic, Harry would have died. He was sure of that.

The boy was being let out of the hospital in one week. Tom had been banned from visiting, for the most part, by Mrs. Cole who wouldn't let anyone near Harry while he was healing in the hospital. Whenever Tom could, he would eavesdrop on the old hag when she came back from her trips, and she told a very serious looking Martha that Harry was in a coma for nearly three days, but was making miraculous strides in his healing. By some of their hushed conversations, Tom gathered that they thought it was unnatural to be healing so quickly. He sneered at that. These people, these *muggles*, Dumbledore had said, would never understand them.

As Tom got their room ready for the boy's return, he was inwardly dreading the actual day as it approached. Amy and Dennis had both kept their mouths shut about that day, and Tom told himself repeatedly that everything would be fine, but he didn't always believe it. When the day finally came, Tom was waiting by the entrance door. When Harry walked through in the late evening, they locked eyes, and for a moment Tom thought everything

would be the same. But then Harry looked away and walked past Tom without so much as a hello.

Tom was stunned, shock running through him, and for a second, he almost screamed as his heart plummeted.

If he wasn't sure the boy blamed him before, he knew it now. But why did it feel even worse than he had imagined?

---

He should have been excited. In a way, he was. Magic was real, he had magic, and in the coming year he would go to Hogwarts with children who also had magical powers. It was like a fairytale.

When the man named professor Dumbledore told Harry about Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and the implication that he wouldn't have to stay at Wool's orphanage for the duration of the year, Harry *had* been excited. But then the guilt came back, and the reason he was in the hospital came crashing down on him in waves. It dampened his mood, and put everything into question.

How could Tom do that? Why had he done that in the cave? If Mrs. Cole told the truth, then Harry also had Tom to thank for saving his life. Tom had saved his life, but he had also hurt Amy and Dennis in the cave. How could Harry forgive that?

The simple truth was, he couldn't. Not truthfully. But it didn't mean he would give up on Tom as his friend. That was what he had decided to do...until professor Dumbledore.

"My boy, Mr. Peters...May I, politely, inquire as to how you got those injuries? It seems your magic is helping the wound heal magnificently, but I can see this was a life-threatening accident. Your magic may not always be able to help you, if you get into such a dangerous situation again."

And that was how Harry told the professor of how Tom had acted in the cave, and how Harry had tried to stop him. The worried look he got in return was one of weariness and resignation.

"Mr. Peters, I held a similar conference with Mr. Riddle not long before I arrived here. He seemed to me deeply troubled...and the chat I had with the matron Mrs. Cole was particularly enlightening. Maybe you have already seen the signs, but I must warn you, my child...that boy is dangerous. Such an incident like the one you had may not be uncommon if you continue to associate with him."

"But—"

"I understand you may have all the complications of a youthful friendship, but I would advice you to take care when dealing with Mr. Riddle. He is not as innocent as he seems."

And with that final parting, the older man with an auburn beard left the hospital grounds, and when Harry looked out the window to see him depart, he blinked, and the man

was gone.

And so the professor's words had dragged on his mind so much that, when the time came for Harry to return to Wool's, and he saw Tom standing at the entrance way, he looked away and walked past him without saying a word.

Maybe it was mean of Harry to do that to Tom. Tom, who was his first friend here at the orphanage. The only person who had accepted Harry for who he was.

But there was also Tom who had tortured Amy in the cave. And Tom who wouldn't let anyone else so much as talk to Harry. When Harry went to sleep that night, professor Dumbledore's words rang through his mind...

*...that boy is dangerous...not as innocent as he seems....*

And was it true? Was Harry just being deceived? He didn't want to think of it, so he shut his eyes against the dark, even as Tom came in much later, and both of them fell into an uneasy sleep.

How would Hogwarts treat them? And when the time came, would they even still be friends?

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the lateness, hope the chapter is okay, I'm doing school too, but I hope to update more frequently, hopefully....



# Chapter 14

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Diagon Alley was everything Harry imagined it to be, and more. From the colorful strange clothes, to the open marketplace with odd store names and even odder merchandise—Harry was too enthralled to properly look where he was going, and by the time he made it to the bookstore, his hair was even wilder than normal, and his glasses askew from falling over in the crowd.

Tom was here, although Harry had no idea where or what he was doing. They had, by a mutual silence, decided to come to Diagon Alley the very next day, and if Dumbledore's directions proved false, or if somehow everything they'd been told was just a lie, at least they had each other to fall back to.

Instead, it was real. Very, very real. Harry had briefly watched Tom's expression on his face when they entered through the back alleyway, as the bricks fell away to reveal the street beyond. Tom's eyes had lit up in such a fascinated expression, and if they hadn't been fighting, Harry would have laughed. But as it was, Harry was still unwilling to talk to Tom, and so again, by a mutual stare and nod, they went their separate ways.

Now, in the wand store, alone, Harry kind of wished he had Tom by his side. He didn't know half of what he was doing, and he felt out of place, like a stranger who had just walked in on the wrong house. He'd seen children his age walking around with their parents, and Harry wondered briefly if his own parents had ever known about this place. It seemed strange to think about, but they must have known. Maybe they were a witch and wizard too. He just didn't know.

"My, young boy, you seem lost and uncertain. Are you in need of a wand?" A soft voice came from the depths of the dusty store front.

Harry watched as a young man with a hunch came out from the back, and smiled, though his eyes shone in a way that made Harry feel uncomfortable.

"Y-Yes, please, I'll need a wand for Hogwarts..."

And just like that, with a snap of the man's fingers, a measuring tape came and measured his right arm to just about everything else between. By the time he was finished, Harry felt very embarrassed, but no sooner had the tape left him did the man start shoving wands at him to take. Harry felt even more foolish when he was asked to wave them.

"No, no, it's not right..."

Soon the wands began to pile up, and Harry had the dreaded feeling that maybe no wand would choose him. It seemed Harry had tried over half the wands in the store. Maybe he wasn't meant to have a wand. However, the young man, Ollivander, was not losing

patience like Harry had assumed, but instead got more excited the longer he was taking. Harry saw a line had begun to pile up outside, and he was starting to feel nervous as people began peering in through the windows to see what was taking so long.

“Tricky, tricky. Let’s see here...you said your name was Peters? Harry... you know, you remind me awfully of another young man, what was his name again? Oh yes, Fleamont Potter. Yes, very much so. But alas...

Looking around the shop, Ollivander took a hesitant step towards the back shelf, where one of the boxes lay untouched.

“Maybe...but it’s still so odd that—never mind. Here, try this one, eleven inches, holly and phoenix feather, but— “

The instant Harry’s hand touched the wand, there were sparks of red and a glowing warmth beneath his fingers. And Harry just knew—this was his wand. This was *his* wand.

“How very strange...” Ollivander’s eyes traveled curiously over Harry as he paid at the counter. Harry just wanted to get out of the store now that he found a wand, but the man seemed inclined to tell him something more, so Harry listened.

“The wand that has chosen you.... has a brother wand, feathers from the same phoenix — it’s very rare, you see. And I just sold the brother wand not even an hour ago... I thought it would be years before they would choose owners, but it seems there’s something very curious about it all...Riddle, he said his name was; oh, do you know him?”

Harry must have had a very shocked face, but he quickly put himself together.

“Yes, he’s my...friend.”

“Well, you two must be very good friends, if even your wand cores are similar. Do research brother wands as they are, indeed, very rare. Now, enjoy your year at Hogwarts.”

As Harry left the store, he felt even more bewildered by what Ollivander had said. Did Tom know he had a brother wand? And why did they have brother wands? Was it fate? Were they meant to be friends? Harry didn’t know, but he felt upset, even as he bought all of his supplies and made his way back to the orphanage. He crept into their shared room, and once he put all of his new things for school away, he fell asleep.

Tom didn’t come back until midnight.

---

There was so much to learn, and so little time. Tom realized the problem as soon as he stepped into the magical world with Harry. Harry must not have realized it, but Tom was well aware of the eyes lingering on them as they walked, on their clothes and appearance, which were obviously not magical in the least. He had followed Harry quietly for a time, observing

the boy in the crowd, but Harry appeared too preoccupied with all that was around him to fully understand the implications.

Despite the fact that Harry was purposefully ignoring Tom, he would not have himself and Harry ostracized from the world where their powers finally had significance. No, he would learn all that he could to understand whatever he was missing.

But Tom only had so much money given to him by Dumbledore as part of the Hogwarts fund. He had to use it wisely to get as much as he could get.

After buying his necessary supplies, most of them secondhand, and once Tom had gotten hold of his wand (and oh, wasn't it such a powerful feeling to wield an actual wand?), he practically ran to the bookstore to attempt to read as much as he could before closing time. He read the first book that caught his eye on the topic of the wizarding world. He had barely managed to finish the introduction when he felt a cold wind at the knowledge that there was such a thing as blood status. *Blood status!* And, according to the book in his hands, was a very important part of wizarding culture.

He wished he could buy the books, but as he quietly read, pretending to be interested in buying, he knew he could only keep up this act for so long. Once it was closing time, Tom hurried to get back to the orphanage and Harry. However, on his way out of Diagon Alley, he noticed something he hadn't noticed on his first trip down the pathway. There was another alley in the back, a different route, and when he got closer to the sign, it read: Knockturn Alley. He knew it was stupid, perhaps, to go looking for trouble in a doubtlessly shady area, but he wanted to know what lay just behind the magical stores and workshops.

And so Tom turned down the darkened path, and when he was done, there was a strange gleam in his eyes as he made his way back to the orphanage in the dead of night. He had learned so much from that small little divergence. And for once in his life, he felt certain of his future, as though he could see it already through the dark sphere of a globe—he knew what he wanted now, and he would achieve it no matter who stood in his way.

When he made it back to his room, Harry was sleeping, his things packed away in a small trunk by his bedside.

If Harry stood in his way...?

Tom rummaged quietly through his newfound purchases, and took out a small, magical bracelet he had bought in Knockturn Alley. It was silver and green with a miniature snake on it. He had bargained all his leftover money on it as a gift for Harry. Not only that, but Tom had wanted the bracelet the moment the merchant said it wouldn't come off the wearer unless a certain phrase was spoken, whatever Tom chose.

Taking the bracelet over to the sleeping boy, he gently placed it around his wrist, hissing in parseltongue the word he wanted to keep it locked.

*Tom Marvolo Riddle.*

Harry didn't know his middle name, so only Tom would be able to take it off. Admiring Harry wearing his present for a moment, he hoped the boy would take it as his apology. Of course, Tom didn't regret hurting Amy and Dennis in the cave, but he did regret the accident with Harry.

If Harry stood in his way....

Harry would never stand in his way. Never again. Tom would make sure of it. Tom did not like to think of himself as so attached to someone else, but ever since Harry had appeared at Tom's side, the boy held a special place in his life... as if here were meant to be Tom's.

As Tom slid into his own bed and fell asleep, he dreamed a strange dream. He dreamed of a man with no nose and hairless, pale skin. The man told him many things, but of the things Tom remembered, he said to be wary of Dumbledore, and to keep his friend Harry close. He said Dumbledore would try to take Harry away, and if he could, Tom should stop it.

It was a very strange dream, and one Tom could hardly even recall when he woke up. He looked over at Harry in the morning sun. Harry was awake, looking at the decorative bracelet on his wrist. He caught Tom's eye, and with a shudder that ran through his entire body, Harry smiled. And just like that, a weight seemed to lift off Tom's shoulders, one he hadn't even known was there.

And if Tom happened to smile back, well, it was only natural.

## Chapter End Notes

I can't seem to keep them fighting for very long lol hope it's okay, thanks for all the comments :)

## Chapter 15

Harry knew he should still be angry at Tom. He should still be offended, and hurt, and all those other emotions that had once swept him away into a sea of stormy, righteous anger. But he couldn't hold onto those feelings, and they didn't last. Amy hadn't talked to him, let alone looked at him, and no one for that matter bothered him at all in the days closing in on September. After Tom gave Harry the bracelet (which Harry loved, but still didn't know how to get off) with the last of his money too, Harry found it hard to still be mad at Tom—and especially since they were going to a magical school together. Harry liked having someone to talk to about it all, his excitement for learning magic, his anxieties about the other students, and his secret fears that Hogwarts might kick him out.

Tom told Harry of his suspicions about wizarding society, and their own prejudices against muggles, but Harry didn't seem as concerned as Tom was. For the most part, Harry and Tom, from that day forward, spent most of their time going to Diagon Alley and learning as much as they could about the world that was kept from them—Tom even used his poor, orphan charm on the bookstore keeper, who let them read the books from morning till noon without trouble. Afterwards, Harry would usually visit the Quidditch shop, admiring the brooms (brooms!) that were used for the strange sport. Harry had only a basic understanding of Quidditch, but he was still so fascinated, and wished desperately to try his hand at it. Mostly, Harry just wanted to fly.

Soon enough, August gave way to September, and on the first of the month, Harry and Tom packed their trunks and meagre possessions and made their way to Kings Cross; neither Mrs. Cole, nor any of the orphans, bid them goodbye. But it wasn't so bad, because although Harry knew he wouldn't be seeing Wool's for a very long time, he also knew that the other orphans would never understand magic the way he and Tom did, and Harry just had to accept that.

When they made it to the station, they encountered the barrier professor Dumbledore had mentioned which led to the secret platform 9 3/4. With a run Harry made the way first, anticipating a crash that never came. Instead, he ran right through the wall, and on the other side, a loud, billowing red train was awaiting them.

"Harry, over here." Tom had already glided through and was walking towards the train. Harry ran to catch up.

"Which compartment will we take?" Harry was eyeing the train nervously. The area was crowded with parents and children, all of whom were trying to get the best seats while their parents said goodbye. It was too overstimulating, and Harry had to blink away the noise.

"Let's head towards the back. Hopefully one will be empty." Tom said,

When they got to the back of the train, it was, thankfully, empty. They took the very last compartment and sat down, their trunks stored above them. When the train started to go,

Harry looked out the window at all the waving parents. He wished his own parents hadn't abandoned him. He sometimes wished the Dursleys hadn't abandoned him too, because although they had treated him with no love, they were still his family. Harry could barely recall his memories of that time, but he knew they were still there—deep, maybe, in his subconscious. Harry looked over to Tom, who was watching him. Maybe it was a stupid thought, but Harry thought of Tom as his family now. After everything they'd been through, the good and the bad, Tom was always by his side.

As the train headed out towards Hogwarts, Harry and Tom had a peaceful ride with no interruptions. They changed into their uniforms early on, and spent the rest of the time reading and speculating about the sorting. When they finally arrived, Harry was a ball of nerves. What would be required of them? Would they have to do magic in front of the whole school? What if he didn't belong in any house?

Tom reassured him, saying they would do no such thing, but Harry thought he saw a nervous edge to Tom's tone, as though he wasn't quite sure either. After all their reading, none of the books had ever mentioned the Hogwarts sorting ceremony and what it actually entailed. It was almost as though it was kept a secret purely to scare the incoming first years, which was working quite well, in Harry's honest opinion.

When they got off the train, they were all herded into little boats with lights which moved magically across the lake. Harry sat next to Tom, and two other boys entered their boat. One had regal blonde hair and turned up his nose at both Tom and Harry. The other had black hair like Harry's, but was more trimmed and neat compared to Harry's wild nest. They whispered amongst themselves and generally ignored both of them, but it was okay, because Harry was too distracted by the glow of the castle to really pay attention. It was beautiful, and Harry stared in awe at the school which was going to be their home.

Soon enough, they entered the castle, where they were told to wait beside two large doors. Harry and Tom could hear the chattering of hundreds of students. When it was time, all of them were herded into the Great Hall, where Harry had to stifle his gasps, watching the magical ceiling where hundreds of candles floated above an enormous, star speckled sky. It was truly breathtaking.

When they got to the front of the hall, Professor Dumbledore explained the sorting, which seemed quite unusual to Harry. When a student was called, they would sit upon a stool and the professor would place an old, tattered hat upon their heads. Harry had jumped the first time the hat opened its mouth.

"Tom" Harry whispered beside him urgently, "What if we're not in the same house?"

Tom looked over, and Harry had the feeling he was desperately thinking the same thing. Neither of them had suspected a magical hat would sort them; Tom had even speculated that they might get to choose, but it appeared not to be the case. Tom wanted to be in Slytherin, as it suited him the most, while Harry couldn't decide which house seemed to fit him. Tom grabbed Harry's hand just as he was called.

"Slytherin Harry. Get into Slytherin!"

“Peters, Harry” Dumbledore said, and Harry let go of Tom’s hand to walk up to the platform. The professor put the hat on Harry’s head, which fell far below his eyes. Harry squirmed in the seat, not sure what to expect when—

*Ah, what an interesting mind you have, Mr. Peters? Or is it something else? I see, you don’t remember, do you?* The hat said inside his mind. Harry felt slightly nauseous at the thought.

*I see plenty of courage in you, oh yes, and your loyalty to those you consider friends is astounding. There’s cunning too, and an intelligent mind. Yes, I can see you would do well in any house. Now, where to put you...?*

Harry sat on the stool for what felt like a lifetime. He could hear whispers start around the hall as the hat seemed to deliberate between all of the houses. He didn’t know how long the hat normally took, but it seemed to be taking extra long over Harry.

*Slytherin...Slytherin...I want to be in Slytherin....*

*Slytherin eh? You want to be close to that friend of yours...there’s a part of you that would do well in Slytherin, yes, but I’m not quite sure if it’s suited for you...*

*Please, Slytherin, I want to be with Tom....*

*You’d make a great Gryffindor, but well, if you’re sure, then better be...*

“SLYTHERIN!” The hat shouted out.

There was a few claps here and there, but generally, Harry was regarded with distaste as he made his way carefully over to the green and silver table. He didn’t know why. He looked towards Tom, who looked at Harry with a pleased expression. Harry sat at the end of the table and waited until Tom’s turn.

“Riddle, Tom” Dumbledore eventually called out, and Tom made his way to the stool. The hat barely touched his head when it called,

“SLYTHERIN!”

Again, there were few applauses, and Tom made his way over to Harry, where they sat in a tense kind of silence around the table. It was broken by the pale, blonde boy Harry had seen on the boat.

“Really? Not one, but two mudbloods? What is this house coming to?”

Harry didn’t know what ‘mudblood’ meant, but he knew, by the boy’s tone, that it was’t anything good.

“Don’t be rude Abraxas, they’re still people.” Said the boy sitting across from Harry. “Hi, my name is Orion Black, and you are?”

“I’m Harry...this-this is Tom—“ Harry introduced, somewhat lamely, to Orion. He turned to Tom, only to find his friend was glaring at Abraxas quite openly. Abraxas appeared unfazed, and soon enough, Tom looked away, and his face melted into something more approachable, if not a little bored.

The feast started not long after the Headmaster Dippet said a few words on the beginning of the school year. Don’t go into the forest. Trials for quidditch start next week. Harry was disappointed to find out that first years couldn’t try out for the team.

When food suddenly appeared in front of him, a feast of such magnitude that it left Harry a little stunned. He looked over to Tom, to find him too staring at the food with something akin to shock.

“Hah! It looks like you’ve never seen such magic before, am I right?” Orion blurted out laughing, while filling up his plate, “That’s nothing. The house-elves do it all from below the school. You’ll see.”

But it wasn’t the magic that shocked him. It was the sheer amount of food, food that looked so delicious to Harry, who had only dreamed of such food before. At the orphanage, dinner was meagre scraps at best. Harry didn’t know what to think, but soon enough, he smiled and began to eat.

---

Mudblood. Oh, Tom had known there would be prejudice against them, but he didn’t know the term. He assumed it meant muggle blood, hence ‘mud’, as in dirty. Dirty blood. Yes, Tom was clever. He could easily put together the words and deduce the derogatory term for himself. Harry likely didn’t know what it meant, but Tom could inform him later. Tom may not have known his own parents, but he knew he wasn’t a mudblood. He absolutely could not be descended from the filth that ran the orphanage. Tom was more, so much more than that.

Harry wasn’t a mudblood either, he felt sure of that too. No person he had summoned to be his could ever be born from muggles. He knew the boy’s relatives must have been muggles, but that was surely where the line ended. Harry didn’t know his real parents either. Tom would find both of their parents. The Hogwarts library surely had old student records. He would find out, and then decide what to do.

Soon, the feast was over, and they were lead down to the dungeons—the Slytherin common room was held behind a blank wall that opened when you said the correct password. Tom was only vaguely interested in the dark interior of the common room, with green plush couches and chairs, and a emerald fireplace that glowed an unearthly green. The windows apparently showed the Black Lake, and Tom thought he saw a fish or two cross by.

They headed up towards their dormitories, and the first years were all placed together, much to Tom’s displeasure. He had slightly hoped for his own room, but at least Harry was beside him. Abraxas and Orion, another boy named Lestrage, and a chubby boy named



Goyle, made towards their trunks situated at the end of their beds. Tom's bed was beside Harry's, and Harry's beside Orion's. The other three occupied the other side of the room.

Soon enough, all the other boys started to get ready for bed, and Tom led Harry towards the bathroom while the others were distracted. Inside, he told Harry in the simplest of terms the meaning of the word 'Mudblood', and how they would likely be ostracized because of this. Harry had looked a little shocked, but understood the need to find their parents, as Tom had stated it was the only way to get rid of the prejudice.

When the two got into bed that night, the first night of many more, Tom thought about the way Harry had come to him, on such a similar night too. It was fate for them to be together, Tom felt sure of this. Tom was also beyond pleased that Harry had made Slytherin...he had been nervous the boy would be placed in a different house and away from Tom, but Harry had proved himself Tom's once again by staying together.

He welcomed the dark as he slept, thinking of the ways he would prove himself in Slytherin and Hogwarts. He didn't dream, but he did feel Harry's presence from the bed over. Such was commonplace now, as Tom had touched his scar so many times that he could practically feel the other boy's emotions. It wasn't a bad thing, on the contrary, Tom loved having this special connection between them. It made him feel powerful, and knowing Harry didn't feel any different, made the secret that much more important to keep to himself. He did wonder, though, why it was so.

What was so different about Harry? Why did Harry come to Tom and him alone? What was this strange connection they seemed to share? What kind of magic was it?

He longed for these answers, but Tom was patient. He would search for his answers one at a time, and then he would know.

Yes, Tom could wait.

# Chapter 16

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next day was a whirlwind of knowledge for Harry, who had never dreamed he would one day be enrolled in a magic school. He and Tom had to take the stairs twice on the way to Transfiguration, both of them getting lost because Tom wanted to go left and Harry right. In the end, both had been wrong, and the result was hurrying into the class just as the final bell rang. Harry was relieved they had made it, but Tom looked disgruntled and didn't say a word for the rest of the class.

Potions was easy to find, as it was down in the dungeons and nearest to their dormitory. He sat beside Tom, but when Professor Slughorn assigned them partners, Harry was paired with Orion and Tom with the other boy in their dormitory, Demetrius Lestrangle.

"So you're a Muggle-Born, right?" Orion asked bluntly to Harry while they set up their cauldron.

"I don't know. I'm an orphan, and I didn't know my parents." Harry said simply, and then started to read the instructions.

"Sorry, I didn't mean—" the other boy appeared shy, all of a sudden. But soon they were quiet as everyone began to brew the simple healing potion as described in their book.

Harry chopped and added all of the ingredients, while Orion stirred at the correct intervals. Once clockwise, then anticlockwise, then clockwise again. It was all very confusing to Harry, but in the end, their potion was slightly above average, which to him seemed very good for his first try. He had seen one of the Gryffindor's almost blow up their cauldron by stirring too fast. He looked over to Tom, who Slughorn said had brewed it so perfectly he awarded Tom points, while Lestrangle stood by, looking angry and mutinous. It didn't surprise Harry that Tom had done so well—Tom had always been something of a perfectionist.

When the lesson was over, Orion stood beside Harry and fidgeted with his sleeves. Then, without saying anything, he packed up and left in a hurry. Harry thought it odd, but didn't think anymore about it because Tom chose that moment to walk up beside him, and together they left the potions classroom. Tom was talking about how simple the potion was, while Harry just smiled. He was glad Tom found the material easy. Harry was sure he would have to study hard to keep up with his friend.

Lunch was an odd affair. When he and Tom went to sit down with the other first and second years, the table was suddenly crowded, and no one offered a seat to either of them. Harry even saw Orion looking away, while Abraxas just ignored them. The girls giggled. Tom glared, then dragged Harry down to the end of the table hierarchy and away from most

of the other Slytherin students. They ate in relative silence, except for the odd note about what classes they had next.

When lunch was over, they made their way to their final class of the day, Charms. Harry was excited for this class, and when the teacher told them the basic levitation spell, Harry was eager to learn. Tom got his feather to float on the first try, while Harry had taken more than half the class to get his to float. Most students struggled, but with Tom's gentle coaching, Harry had surpassed most of his classmates.

When the day was over, Harry and Tom headed over to the library to start their research. Harry had never seen so many books in one place, and instantly knew he and Tom would be spending a lot of time in the library. They spent the rest of the evening going over their new homework, while Tom looked over some old student record books, looking for his last name.

When neither of them found anything worthwhile, they headed back to the Slytherin common room. Harry was tired, and so when they headed to bed early, he was glad. As Harry got into bed and drifted off into dreams, he wondered what the year would bring. He had hoped to make friends, but it appeared the other Slytherins didn't want to know him and Tom because of some stupid prejudice against muggles. Tom had said he would find a way past that, but Harry wasn't so sure. Harry just hoped things turned out alright in the end.

---

Flying lessons started later that week, and to be honest, Tom was not looking forward to it. Based on Harry's enthusiasm and excitement for the magical sport called Quidditch during the summer, to which Tom could care less, he easily deduced that Harry was quite looking forward to learning how to fly. Harry woke up that day with an energy Tom did not feel. Flying lessons was the first class of the day, and Tom very much liked his feet firmly on the ground.

When breakfast was over, the first years all gathered around the pitch in excitement. Once the Gryffindors calmed down enough for the teacher to actually teach, all the students were told to command the brooms into their hands by saying "up". Tom thought it was the most ridiculous thing he had ever heard, and the instructions reminded him of a horse not a broom! Nevertheless, Tom actually struggled to make the broom listen to his command. It was infuriating, but looking around, none of the other children had gotten it right too. Tom looked over to Harry, and what he saw made him raise an eyebrow.

"Tom! Look!" Harry was already holding his broom, the only one to have done so on the first try.

"Two points to Slytherin! Well done, Mr. Peters!" The professor said briskly before going off to help the others. Harry smiled at Tom, who smirked in return.

Abraxas looked over then, and quickly succeeded in making his broom jump too under the pressure. Orion was looking at Harry quizzically, and then he too succeeded after a few more tries. Not one to be outdone, Tom looked down at his quivering broom and said sharply, "Up!"

The broom shot into his hand, and thankfully Tom had the presence of mind not to look startled.

The next part of the lesson involved mounting the broom and hovering just above the grass. Tom thought it was boring, and clearly Harry agreed. But the professor just said it was necessary to learn how to correctly handle a broom before doing anything more dangerous.

And a part of Tom agreed that riding a broom was dangerous. He didn't truly want to go any further than hovering; at the same time, his mind wandered during the rest of the lesson. Brooms were limited in flying abilities, even Tom could see that. He idly imagined making his own flying technique, and vowed that if he did, it would be much safer than a riding on a flimsy piece of wood.

The lesson ended without fuss, but just as the flying instructor was walking away, and most of the Gryffindors were heading back, Abraxas sauntered over and picked up one of the spare brooms.

"Think you're so good at flying, Peters, because you got one thing right? Do you want to test your skills? I'll bet you can't even do a simple turn!"

Harry flushed, then turned red in anger. Tom watched with increasing alarm as the Malfoy boy talked down to Harry. He hoped Harry had enough sense to ignore him, but then —

"Hey, stop it braxas, he's obviously not had training—!" Orion started, but then stopped when Harry grabbed a broom as well and started to mount.

Tom looked over to where the teacher had been, but they were already headed back inside. Abraxas smirked and mounted his broom at the same time.

"On the count of three then? We'll see which one of us falls first! One, Two, Three!"

While Abraxas pushed off the ground steadily, Harry, on the other hand, pushed off the ground so hard he shot up like a bullet. Abraxas looked at Harry with wide eyes as the boy soared high off the ground, and Tom's heart strained with nerves the longer and higher Harry started to fly. Abraxas was red in the face while he struggled to keep up with Harry. Tom even thought he heard Harry laughing! Then the boy did something stupid. So stupid Tom thought his body couldn't get any more tense. Harry dived from that great height!

And he wasn't stopping. He was still diving, straight at the ground, and Abraxas swerved out of the way just in time. Tom pulled his wand out to perform something—anything—but then, something miraculous happened. Harry pulled upwards sharply just before he hit the grass, and when his feet barely touched the ground he tumbled off his broom, completely unhurt, still laughing and high on adrenaline. Orion rushed over to where Harry had landed, exclaiming how brilliant his flying was, while Abraxas swiftly got off his broom just in time to see the instructor come roaring back.

"NO FLYING! Did you not hear me? Mr. Peters! That was exceptionally dangerous—I can't even begin to—come with me! And you too Mr. Malfoy! Don't think I didn't see

that!”

Harry had stopped laughing and caught Tom’s eye. He looked scared, all of a sudden, and both he and Abraxas headed into the castle, following solemnly after the professor.

Tom had never seen Harry especially talented at anything. He was good at a few things, yes, and with Tom’s help, he always did well in his school work. But this was the first time Tom had seen Harry truly excel at something that Tom did not. Watching Harry fly had been nerve wracking, but now that Harry was safely on the ground, he could appreciate skill when he saw it. He only wondered where Harry had learned such flying, or if he was born with it.

---

Harry followed the instructor nervously down into the dungeons, Abraxas Malfoy trailing behind him. Harry didn’t want to be expelled, he had only just gotten here! Thoughts swirled around his mind until the teacher knocked harshly on Professor Slughorn’s office. The professor opened the door, and Harry was ushered into the potion master’s office, which was decorated with comfortable couches and plush arm chairs. Harry was pushed down to sit in the chair in front of the desk. Abraxas sat stiffly by his side.

“Now what is the cause of concern, my dear? Have these two been causing trouble down at the flying pitch?” Slughorn winked at Harry, and Harry felt some of his nerves release. But then the flying instructor started to speak, and he knew instantly he was doomed.

“You could say that! These two were caught flying high around the pitch, on their first flying lesson, no doubt! I can testify that Mr. Peter’s was doing a nose dive from high above the Quidditch pitch!”

“Nose dive, you say? First flying lesson?” Slughorn blinked.

“I saw it with my own eyes, Professor, the boy dropped from high above the Quidditch hoops, and just before he would have likely crushed his neck, he skimmed the grass! Can you believe it? I’m not even sure Fleamont Potter could have pulled out from such a dive! Mr. Malfoy was flying more reasonably, at least, but I had warned them both specifically against flying, to which they both broke the rules. I understand that—“

“Ah may I interrupt, miss...?”

“Olivia. Olivia Woods.”

“Right, Ms. Woods, I will handle the punishments for both boys, if you would kindly excuse us? I am certain I wouldn’t want to, ah, hold up any appointments you may have...”

“Certainly. I will leave these two with you, Professor.”

And with that, the flying instructor left the office with a loud bang. Harry winced. When he looked up, however, the professor was smiling at him.

“How much do you know about Quidditch, Mr. Peters?”

---

Tom was pacing. Harry was gone for most of the day, had missed Transfiguration, and even the Malfoy boy had come back early on, pale and frowning.

Tom did not realize Harry’s offence had been so serious, and if the worst happened and the boy was expelled, Tom would have to step in. He didn’t know what he could do, but he would do something.

Just before dinner, however, Harry came tumbling into the common room, looking for Tom and clearly struggling to say something. Tom inclined a brow and gestured for them to go to the dormitory to talk. Once there, it seemed Harry could no longer contain what he wanted to say.

“Tom! I got on the quidditch team! I’m going to be a seeker! A temporary one, because they want to see my skills first, but Professor Slughorn said I could be the youngest seeker on the team in fifty years!”

“Hold on, Harry, what about your punishment? I thought that—“

“Oh! You wouldn’t believe it, Tom. Professor Slughorn said my punishment is to work hard on winning for the team. He showed me the rules, and brought in the Captain of the Quidditch team, Sylvia Horns, to teach me the basics. As for Malfoy, the professor decided to have him clean potion cauldrons on Saturday, but only to show he wasn’t being a pushover. Can you believe it Tom?”

Tom looked over at Harry’s excitement. The boy was bubbling with energy. Tom even felt a degree of this excitement in his chest. He was glad Harry wasn’t going to be expelled. He was even amused that the Malfoy heir had to take the brunt of the punishment, seeing as it was him who had goaded Harry into flying in the first place. The only thing was this new sport that Tom had little information on. Was it dangerous? Would Harry injure himself regularly? Tom wouldn’t have that.

“Harry, tell me you won’t go flying recklessly like that again. You nearly—“

Tom’s anxiety must have shown on his face, for Harry suddenly looked very serious, and said,

“Don’t worry Tom. I’ll be fine. I’m going to get more lessons over the weekend, and practice takes place every Thursday after dinner. I’ll be fine.”

Tom wasn’t so sure, but he let the matter slide, for now. Leading the boy by the hand, he pulled Harry out of the dormitory and towards the Great Hall.

Orion Black looked up sharply as they left, and something about the gesture made Tom’s skin prickle. He had noticed the boy’s desperation to talk to Harry in potions, and Tom would not be sharing Harry’s friendship with anyone else. He had decided on that long ago. He would not have a repeat of the cave.

As Tom and Harry left for dinner, Tom's thoughts went straight back to the library. He needed to research again. He had found nothing in the student records so far, but he still had a lot of material to cover. Maybe he would even research without Harry, for a while. Harry was somewhat of a distraction for Tom, with his black messy hair and glasses. Maybe the boy's Quidditch practice wouldn't be so bad for Tom. Besides, he didn't think Harry would understand his research topics anyway. Yes, Harry would be suitably distracted, and Tom could research the things he wanted to without sharing them with the boy. He needed to find out about their connection, and how it was possible for Tom to summon him. He needed to find his parents, and Harry's, to convince the other Slytherins he was just as much as they were, if not better. Tom had no doubt he *was* better, but he needed proof if he wanted to succeed in his plans.

Because Tom Riddle had many plans. And he would see them become reality, one way or another.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry this one took me so long, I had lots of homework, still do, hopefully this chapter came out okay. Thanks for all the comments :) I might do a time skip soon, and maybe a little on what's happening in the future. Hope that's okay :)

# Chapter 17

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As Harry passed the Slytherin Quidditch tryouts with flying colours, he was officially, or perhaps unofficially, named as their secret weapon in the coming games against Gryffindor. Sylvia Horns, the Slytherin team's captain, had raved about Harry to the point of embarrassment; the others had been reluctant to accept him, a 'mudblood' *and* a first year, but after catching two different snitches in under five minutes total, all members of the team had raved about his flying skills.

On the one hand, Harry was elated that he had done so well—not only had he been accepted on the team as seeker, but Harry enjoyed being good at something for once. On the other hand, however, Harry was dealing with an angry Malfoy, who had teamed up with Lestrange in order to try to get Harry into trouble. Most of the time it never worked, as Tom was beside him helping to deflect the attacks, but one time in early October, Harry had been late after Quidditch practice, and consequently found himself facing both Malfoy and Lestrange in the dungeons.

While Harry was good at some defensive spells, having learned a few new spells with Tom in the library, he paled in comparison to his friend; therefore, it wasn't very surprising when Harry found himself easily disarmed in a matter of minutes. That time, Harry had been bullied to the point of tears, but thankfully it ended when Orion came down the hallway and threatened Abraxas with a spell or two of his own. Lestrange said he was a traitor, and Orion flushed red but stood his ground. Eventually, a teacher came by and gave all of them detention, including Harry and Orion, for using spells in the hallways.

When Tom found out later that night, he had been livid that he hadn't been there for Harry; and ever since then he took to waiting for Harry after practices to escort him safely back to their dormitory. It was nice, and Harry found he enjoyed walking with Tom through the castle late at night. It was almost like a secret, and Harry vowed to one day explore the entire castle with Tom. Even if it meant breaking a few rules...

In early November, Harry had his first game against Gryffindor. The crowd was energetic, and when Harry caught the snitch ten minutes into the game, weaving between the stands and spectators, the crowd cheered wildly for him while the Gryffindors sulked. When all the euphoria died down later that night, and after receiving congratulations from even the most muggle-hating of Slytherins, Harry found Tom smiling at him from across the common room. Most of the Slytherins' had reluctantly accepted the both of them, Harry for his flying skills and Tom for the fact that he was surely the most brilliant first year that Hogwarts had ever seen.

Harry was happy, and not even Abraxas's snide remarks on their way to bed could bring him down. Orion was even more friendly, after saving him in the hallway, things between them had grown into something of a silent companionship. Neither of them had said anything more than a few words to each other, but every once in a while they would be



teamed up for potions, and Harry found he enjoyed Orion's company very much. He was... different from Tom, who was always beside Harry, and something about the boy just made Harry laugh. Harry also noticed the boy was friends with a small girl in second year named Eileen Prince. The two of them could often be found playing wizards chess in the common room.

When they finally headed off to bed, Harry dreamed of someone holding him and whispering soft words. He also dreamed of a thing he had not dreamt of since he arrived at the orphanage—the green, green light, and a woman screaming.

---

Tom would not admit it, but he was growing frustrated with the lack of information as time went on. He *should* have found his parents by now. Riddle had to exist somewhere—anywhere! But no amount of searching through books and old records listed the name, or at least, in the Hogwarts standard library. There was still the restricted section to look into, but Tom did not think he would be able to get into that area until his later years. And for a while, a fearful thought had held onto Tom, lasting almost the entire month of October: what if he really *was* a muggle-born? The feeling didn't stay much longer than that, however; Tom knew he was special in a way the others didn't understand, could not possibly perceive—well, it was only a matter of time. Until he was older, Tom would pretend to be an ignorant muggle-born. Until he was older, stronger, and knew more about the magical world, Tom would pretend.

Harry, on the other hand, had been blissfully ignorant of Tom's troubles. His popularity had grown in Slytherin for his profound Quidditch skills. While that suited Tom just fine, he was more concerned about the other's infringing their relationships on Harry. Harry was his, he had summoned the boy, and where would he be if not for that?

Even more frustrating, was, perhaps, the situation with Orion and Abraxas. The Malfoy heir and Lestrangle had tried to bully Harry, and Orion had been there to save him, not Tom. He knew Harry was harbouring some sort of affection for Orion ever since, and it bothered Tom more than he was willing to admit.

So what if Harry had been temporary 'friends' with Amy Benson and a few of the other orphans. They were all just lowly muggles. They had learned their place. Orion Black, however, was a wizard, and therefore, had to be treated differently than muggles. Besides, according to Tom's research, Orion came from a wealthy family of pure-bloods dating back hundreds of years. Maybe Harry's friendship with the boy wouldn't be so bad, considering Tom could also use Black's influence for his own purposes...?

Still, the thought was bitter in his mouth. If he let Harry be friendly with Orion, then who was next?

Every now and then, Tom snuck into Harry's bed to watch the boy sleep. He would sooth his scar with his finger tips, and the pleasant tickling would tingle all through his body. Surely Harry must feel something. Such a connection couldn't possibly be one-sided. Then again, he only did it when Harry was asleep. He wanted to try it, just once, while the boy was awake. One time, when Tom was feeling particularly angry, after brushing his fingers against Harry's fringe like he normally did, Harry had started screaming instead. Tom hastily pulled

his hand away, and once Harry had gone back to sleep, Tom had crept back to his own bed and thought over what had happened in more detail.

If he was angry, could Harry feel that anger inside him? What was it about Tom's touch that time that had hurt the boy? He hadn't touched Harry's scar while feeling intense emotions ever since, but the question remained: why Tom? Why was Harry so deeply connected to him that it made his chest hurt in a strange, but not entirely unpleasant way?

Time moved. The holidays eventually came, and Harry got Tom a very personal gift with his leftover money. A black, leather-bound diary. It was the first true gift Harry had gotten for Tom, and Tom was very pleased with it. He didn't have the money to afford another gift since the bracelet, so Tom did something else for his friend. On Christmas Day, he surprised Harry with a secret trip around the castle that lasted late into the night. He knew the boy wanted to explore Hogwarts together, and so Tom led him through the castle while telling the boy a story he had read in the library one evening. A story of four founders, of the great battle between Gryffindor and Slytherin, and of course, the Chamber of Secrets, which was rumoured to be hidden somewhere underneath the castle. Harry had loved it, and they spent the entire night trying to find it. While they did find a few hidden passageways, they came no closer to finding the mysterious chamber than any of their predecessors.

When the holidays passed, Harry was friendly not only with Orion, but with a Slytherin second-year girl named Eileen Prince. In Tom's opinion, the girl was ugly, but she was quite good at potions, almost good enough to rival Tom. Tom, of course, was superior, and Prince was, according to gossip, a muggle-lover. So, Tom let Harry have his friendships. It would be fine, he told himself, and if Tom secretly took pleasure that Harry still wore his bracelet, and that he could practically feel the emotions of the boy and knew, as instinctively as breathing, that Harry still held affection for Tom in the highest regard, then there was no damage to be done. Harry was still his, the boy Tom had summoned, and Tom would not let anyone stand between them. Not Black, and certainly not Prince.

But when Tom dreamed, he dreamt that strange dream again. He was sitting in a chair, and the man before him looked more snake than human. It all felt oddly familiar. He told Tom to keep Harry close, and to warn him against Dumbledore. He told Tom that one day, Dumbledore would take Harry away, but that he mustn't allow this to happen. Harry was very special, and Dumbledore would use Harry to destroy him.

When Tom woke up, he remembered the dream, and felt the need to write it down in his new journal.

He wouldn't tell Harry about it, though, he decided. Harry liked the transfiguration professor far too much for Tom's comfort. But Tom vowed that if Dumbledore ever got in the way of his relationship with Harry, he would do something. And if Dumbledore took Harry away from Tom...

Tom decided, then and there, to never let that happen. If anyone took Harry away from Tom, they would pay with their lives.

Of that, Tom was certain.

## Chapter End Notes

I think a time skip is going to happen next chapter ...Hope this one is okay, thank you for all the comments and I hope you enjoy :)

# Chapter 18

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

3 years later...

“So tell us, Tom, what goals are you currently pursuing? Surely with your marks there’s no denying that you’ll gain acceptance into the Ministry! Heck, you may even become the Minister himself! Even with your upbringing.”

Tom swallowed the sharp retort he had for Slughorn daring to mention the orphanage, but as it was, he smiled and placidly looked around at the gathered table, pausing briefly on an empty chair, but nevertheless, continued as though nothing was bothering him.

“I’m afraid I don’t have any...specific goals for the future, Professor, other than, perhaps, becoming a teacher...”

The table laughed mildly, and Tom allowed the group to joke at his expense before mildly glaring at Abraxas, who coughed and then, quite suddenly, all the Slytherins gathered for Slughorn’s prestigious “Slug Club” quieted at though slapped.

“A teacher, hm?” As usual, the dim-witted professor didn’t seem to notice how easily Tom controlled all of the ‘guests’ at his little get-togethers. Most were Slytherins, and occasionally another House made their way into the Slug Club, but Tom had no specific need to control the odd ones out. As a mere fourth year, Tom had already gained the favour of nearly the entire Slytherin house. It hadn’t been easy, with the House of Snakes being set up in a hierarchical pattern, with the most powerful on the top, combined with blood status, all the way down to the ‘mud-bloods’ and the weak. Well, Tom wasn’t weak, and he most definitely wasn’t a mud-blood. Indeed, he had quickly showed over the years that he was not only immensely powerful and talented, but had a streak of cruelty to those who dared to question him or attempt to knock him down.

“I don’t suppose you have a favourite subject then? Anything you wish to teach in particular, Tom?”

Tom was tired of being questioned by the old dodgy professor, and so he turned and smiled brightly, with just a glint of a threat in his eyes, as he said,

“Defence, professor. I aim to be the very best Defence professor Hogwarts has ever seen.”

And while Tom’s tone gave the nosy professor a little laugh, nobody else moved, evident as it was that Tom was in a foul mood.

However, just then, the clock chimed eight, and so Slughorn ended the party with a wave and a wink as he magically cleared the table, while telling them all that next time he

would have something special to give them, as a treat. Tom had no doubt that it was some sort of exotic delicacy, as the man was prone to giving them occasionally, pretending that it was the first time he had done so.

And so Tom headed out of the suffocating room in a terrible mood, as was always the way when he attended Slughorn's meetings. It wasn't merely the man and his insufferable collecting habits, as if Tom and the others were just trophies to have and favours to gain—as annoying as it was, the singular fact that made his mood tumble downwards into a spiral of heated, barely tolerable irritation was that whenever Tom attended Slughorn's petty little club, he was reminded, very visibly, of Harry's 'mysterious' and persistent absences.

Oh, he had no doubt that Harry knew when and where the meetings were. Merlin only knows how many times Slughorn had cornered the boy, asking when he will be able to attend. And every time, Harry made up some wild excuse or another, from non-existent Quidditch practices to even going as far as to say he would go just to please the man, and then cancelling with a note at the last minute, telling the professor he was too sick to attend.

It wasn't just that Tom had wanted Harry to attend the meetings—the boy could use some formal party experiences, and in the future, Tom did not want the boy to make a fool of himself—but also because he knew where Harry was and what he was doing instead.

And it was this that enraged Tom. He knew Harry was out playing games with the Black boy, and likely Prince as well. The three of them had been nearly inseparable for years, quickly forming a friendship that even Tom's manipulations had failed against.

Well.

“Abraxas.” Tom gestured to the boy walking beside him. The Malfoy heir raised a pale eyebrow at him, but at Tom's dark look, the boy suddenly snapped to attention and said, knowing specifically what was making Tom angry from years of being by his side.

“Of course. I'll go check the kitchens.”

And with that, Abraxas turned and headed down the opposite corridor, presumably to go check for the location of his most inconvenient person.

It hadn't been difficult to convince the Malfoy heir to join his side. Indeed, two years ago, Tom had carefully revealed his true heritage to a select few, mainly Abraxas and Lestrange, and in turn, their loyalty had created a support for Tom's following from within the hierarchy of Slytherin.

Now, as a fourth year, he controlled all but the most stubborn of Slytherins, mostly higher years who had not yet heard of Tom's heritage. Besides, Tom was still waiting to find the elusive Chamber of Secrets. It was his calling, he felt, to find it. And once he did...

Once him and Lestrange made their way into the common room, as it was nearly curfew, Tom took his usual place by the fire, picking a comfortable armchair as he opened his book to start reading. He had been thinking, for some time now, of creating a little club for

his followers. And the name that had repeatedly hung around his mind, the Knights of Walpurgis, seemed to stick with him in terms of his goals.

Despite what he had told Professor Slughorn, Tom had many goals to achieve. One was to change the entire Ministry of Magic, and to do so, Tom needed to have devoted followers. Creating a club, in which they could all practice the Dark Arts and learn under Tom's thumb, he would have a devotion that would be difficult to break. Yes, it was perfect. He would tell Abraxas about it tonight.

Speaking of which, the pale blonde boy came into the common room not a moment later, and the object of Tom's irritation came in shortly afterwards. However, all of his irritation quickly fled the moment they locked eyes, and Tom felt again a thrum in his heart, along with that strange pulling sensation whenever Harry was near.

Tom still did not know how he felt about the boy he had summoned so long ago. Every summer, when they returned to the stifling atmosphere of Wools, Tom would notice Harry growing more and more striking as the years passed. As if the word 'striking' could sum up all the parts of his mysterious boy, a boy who, in every right, should not exist.

Harry made his way over to Tom, the moment evidently fleeting between them, and lazily coiled into a chair near the fireplace, his back turned to Tom.

"I hate when you do that, you know."

"Do what?" Tom loved playing these little games. Of course he knew what Harry was talking about, he just loved getting the boy all riled up.

Harry narrowed his eyes. He knew what Tom was doing, and it pleased Tom that the boy could read his moods so easily.

"As if you don't know! You know I hate it when you send...Malfoy to come and get me! It's not as if he's exactly polite to me either. And I'm not a baby. I don't need you to come and tell me it's nearing curfew!"

"Hm? But isn't it passed curfew now? If I hadn't sent someone, you would have stayed out all night. And I won't have you getting into trouble with Black again. It's disgraceful, and puts shame on Slytherin house."

Harry scoffed, "As if you actually care. Just...come yourself if you want to see me. *Don't* send Malfoy again. He hates both me and Orion. And he called Eileen ugly today!"

"She is ugly"

"Tom!"

"Alright." Tom had an idea, and smiled as he relished in it, "I won't send Malfoy to fetch you ever again. But in return, I want you to do something for me."

Harry looked nervous, and rightfully so. Even Tom's heart was beating in trepidation for what he was about to say. He leaned forward.

“What?” Harry looked perplexed over his glasses, pushing them back against his nose. Tom noticed a faint blush on the boy’s cheeks as Tom leaned even closer, whispering into his ear.

“Promise that you’ll join my friends and I for a little...party next Sunday? I am thinking of starting a club. I want you to join.”

Harry, to Tom’s surprise, laughed at that. It was such a laughter that made Tom scowl. He was being serious, and Harry had the nerve to laugh at him?

“No, no! I’m not laughing at you, Tom. I’m laughing because it’s so predictable of you!”

Tom’s scowl deepened, and he was nearly to the point of rejecting the offer altogether when Harry suddenly said, quite happily,

“Of course I’ll come, Tom. You only had to ask.”

And with that, the boy left him merrily, heading upstairs to their dormitory. And Tom, meanwhile, was left in a state of utter speechlessness, his mouth slightly parted in surprise. But then Abraxas came and sat down, and Tom closed his mouth, quickly hiding his expression with a mask of indifference.

Abraxas looked at him questionably, then the stairs, and then smirked,

“I see you’ve—“

Tom lowered his face, his eyes burning with anger, and Abraxas left off what he was going to say with a startled expression.

Tom picked up his book again, a book on mind arts, and thoroughly ignored Abraxas as the boy took out his own homework to work in relative silence.

“I am starting a club. We are called the Knights of Walpurgis. It’s a secret club, only those I invite are allowed to know, and I fully expect you to keep it that way.”

Abraxas looked up, then, and noticing the way Tom’s eyes were dark with threat, nodded in affirmation.

Tom then went back to his reading, looking out of the corner of his eye when Orion Black and Eileen Prince made their way into the common room, then parted ways to head up to bed.

After another hour of reading and homework, Tom too headed upstairs.

When he arrived in the dormitory, he noticed Harry’s bed was already closed for the night, the curtains pulled shut. Orion, Lestrage, and Goyle were getting changed into their night clothes, and Tom vastly ignored them in favour of getting ready for bed himself.

When the lights were turned off, and Tom was in his own bed, he thought about the past three years at Hogwarts. The war had escalated in those years, and while it was only September now, he was internally fearful of having to go back to the muggle world at the end of term. The Wizarding world was also at war with a man named Gellert Grindelwald. In Tom's mind, the man was an example of what Tom wanted in the world, but in the end, the Dark Lord Grindelwald would only be an obstacle for Tom to eliminate. Ultimately, he could not have competition.

His thoughts then turned to the boy sleeping one bed over. He was a mystery, if there ever was one. Tom was not sure how to put it, but the more he tried researching on the boy's past, the more obsessed Tom became with finding answers. As far as he had searched, Tom had not found a single, credible book that explained what he was seeing in the boy he had summoned. They weren't related, and yet, it was possibly the only explanation to some of the boy's traits.

It made his insides twist in discomfort—Harry could not be his brother. It didn't make sense, and even though they looked something alike, he knew it was not true. Tom didn't know how to explain it, but he felt it deep in his intuition. They were not brothers, or even closely related at all. But it made the questions surrounding the boy's existence that much more puzzling.

On the other hand, Tom had found his own past quite well after his first year at Hogwarts. His filthy father was a muggle, and a rich one at that, it was no wonder Tom could not find a single source bearing the name 'Riddle. And Tom intended to put his father in his place next summer, to do away with any weaknesses in his past. His mother, also a pathetic creature, had died giving birth to him, the only accomplishment in her feeble life that Tom had found for her. Tom found no sympathy in her story, once he had heard it, of how she lived in squalor and misery and pining after a muggle. Tom hated his name, if just for that.

He would not be remembered as Tom Riddle. Tom had already thought of a name, cleverly using the letters to rearrange them into something new. He wanted to show Harry what he thought of it, but the idea of what Harry would say in return made Tom pause, and deliberate in telling him.

And the boy's scar was another mystery. Tom had not touched it in over a year, but he could still feel the boy's emotions, and in turn, he knew Harry could feel Tom's. Tom had forged some kind of connection between them, that day long ago, when he had forcibly touched Harry's scar. Since then, their connection had only escalated into unknown territory, where even Tom did not know what would happen.

And through it all...Tom still hesitated to act on his utmost desires. Because it was irrational. It didn't make sense to Tom, who had never had such thoughts or feelings before.

Abraxas only knew the half of it. What Tom felt was much more than desire, much more than a want or need, so much more that it was physically painful in his chest. He didn't have a name for it, but Tom had read about such fantasies before, and it had disgusted him at the time. Now, however, Tom had a better understanding of what it entailed. It...didn't disgust him, when he thought of the boy. His summoned person...to be his—



Just before Tom closed his eyes, to go to sleep, he saw, in his fevered mind, a vision of himself, standing before a crowd of his followers, and Harry by his side. Yes, that was what he wanted. He wanted Harry by his side. He wanted Harry to be his, his and solely his. He didn't want to share anymore. Harry was more than a friend. Harry was destined to be by his side, forever.

Tom would make this a reality.

---

September, 1994

Albus Dumbledore looked through the pensive memories scattered across his table. Ever since he had discovered Harry Potter's disappearance from his muggle home, he had questioned everyone who could have possibly seen the boy, or knew of his whereabouts.

It proved little worth, as no one had seen him since he was but a young boy. And what Albus had seen in the muggles minds, of the living conditions the poor boy had been subjected to, had made Albus cringe in despair. Why, oh why, was he so convinced that sending the boy to his muggle relatives had been a good idea? It had been, at the time, the only option. Now however...

But that was besides the point.

Lord Voldemort had returned little over a year ago, after gaining the Philosopher's stone, stealing the gem from Gringotts bank right under Albus's nose. No one had believed Albus, at first, and had declared him mad for saying that He-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named was back.

At that time, the Dark Lord had been hiding, slowly gathering his followers once again in the shadows.

But now Lord Voldemort had openly declared war on the Ministry. His new body was powerful, more powerful than any ritual could perform. And here was Albus, wasting his time looking through memories of the boy once known as Tom Marvolo Riddle.

With Harry Potter gone for years, the Light had little to hope for. But then, Albus had remembered something. Something so strange, he was almost sure it was fiction—it could not be true. So he had sifted through the piles of memories and had found what he was looking for amidst the piles of vague sentiments long forgot.

It was Tom Riddle's sorting. And what he had found shocked him to his very core.

Harry Potter, or rather, Harry Peters, with his scar, and looking so much like James it was physically absurd, being sorted into Slytherin just before Tom. He had not expected to find the boy, let alone know of his specific whereabouts. But the question remained:

*How on earth did Harry Potter end up almost fifty years in the past?*

If Albus strained his memory, he could vaguely remember the boy as causing a lot of trouble in school, but he could not, for the life of him, remember what happened to him.

So here was Albus, looking through the memories of nearly fifty years ago. What happened to Harry Potter? How did he end up in the past? And could Albus dare hope to bring him back?

He did not know. But thinking deeply on the matter, he decided to try his best. If he could somehow communicate with his former self, if he could somehow send a message, well, perhaps... that was a start.

## Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all the comments, I'm glad Tom and Harry are older now lol.  
Anyways, hope someone enjoys :)

# Chapter 19

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The difference between Tom Riddle's club and Slughorn's little after dinner parties was in how each member acted towards the news—that the Heir of Slytherin was making a new exclusive club (so exclusive, in fact, that no one outside of those invited was even privy to its existence), had the selected few in hot debate over who would be invited, who would *not* be invited, and what kind of influence the club would have over the hierarchy of Slytherin politics.

Abraxas Malfoy had exceeded Tom's expectations in keeping the club a secret, and even now, on the eve of their gathering, no one outside of Tom's inner circle knew that anything was happening tomorrow night. Tom arranged the meeting to fall just before midnight, and as he could often be found sitting beside the head fire in the Slytherin common room, he noted that very few souls tended to stay up past ten. They would each take turns, Tom decided, in leaving their respected dormitories. If someone happened to see one of them, then Tom would deal with it personally. He wasn't bothered in tampering with the minds of some offhanded Slytherins who decided to go snogging in a broom cupboard late at night. Either way, Tom would ensure that no one knew where they were going, or what activities they would eventually be learning.

While Tom knew all of these things as they swirled around in his mind, on the night of the actual gathering, Tom had a visitor in the form of one Orion Black.

Tom had been reading by the fire, waiting for the last of the Slytherins to head off to bed, when the Black boy came down and took a daring seat in front of him.

Tom pretended to ignore him, and the silence that ensued, as he waited for the boy to crumble under the pressure. Oh, Tom knew Orion well enough to know what the boy wanted—that he chose the last possible minute was something of an annoyance; when Tom had asked Harry to join his club, he also knew that Harry wouldn't fail in telling Orion about the meeting too. But Tom had other things to do than wait for the Black heir to finally gather enough courage to talk to him alone.

Then, after a short cough, Orion spoke in a mildly hesitant voice,

"I-I heard you were making a—"

Tom shot him a glare, at once gaining eye-contact, and the boy thankfully shut up before anyone else heard.

"If you want *in*, Black, then you'll offer me something in return." Tom said plainly, shutting his book and leaning in. He knew, from the very first time Tom had started making himself known in Slytherin house, that the Black boy had desired his friendship too, like so many others. He knew that the Black family was powerful, and Tom wanted that power for

himself. Alphard Black was already out of Hogwarts, and Walburga, Orion's second-year cousin, was quite the banshee when something did not go her way. No, Tom's only hope of gaining the influential Black family was through Orion. He knew from Harry that Black struggled with gaining respect within his family—they saw his friendship with Harry as less than favourable, and the Prince girl, although a pureblood, was always seen corresponding with muggles and mudbloods. All of this, combined with the fact that Orion was not very ambitious to start with, led the boy to becoming distant with his family. It would seem that Orion saw Tom as an opportunity, as Tom was the Heir of Slytherin, to gain back respect in the eyes of his family. So Tom would let him.

But not without a price.

“What do you want? I mean, in return...?”

Tom smiled sharply at the question. Oh, Tom had a lot he wanted from the boy, from old family books to ancient artifacts surely kept in the family's historic vault. But such things weren't important right now. Right now, he only wanted one thing.

“I want you to swear your loyalty to me.”

Black seemed surprised by the request, and whispered urgently,

“Of course! I-I can do that...do you want—“

“A vow? Of course I do.” Tom scoffed, “And let's make one thing clear: you are not to tell Harry about this. You will join my club, you will be a friend to Harry, but your loyalty will ultimately be to me. Is that clear?”

Black was silent at this, and he looked wary of Tom for the first time. But then he sighed, and said,

“Alright. I agree. Do you want the vow now or—“

“Later. After Harry leaves tonight, we will make the vow.” Tom picked up his book again. He watched as the last few stragglers headed up to bed, and decided to wait another half an hour before he sent the signal for his followers to leave. They were meeting in an unused classroom on the third floor, far away from the regular classrooms. The room Tom had found during the week was large, just suited enough for their purposes.

“Go back to bed, and you may leave with Harry when he goes. Don't get caught.”

As Orion went back up the stairs, Tom smiled to himself, thinking of all the ways in which he could use this newest vow.

---

While Harry may have agreed to join Tom's club, on the inside, however, he was still somewhat hesitant to go. Because Harry didn't like Tom's friends, for one thing. Abraxas Malfoy was nothing compared to the towering seventh-year, Julius Mulciber. And then there was Lestrage, who hated Harry on principal, and two fifth-years named Antonin Dolohov

and Theodore Avery, who acted more like bodyguards than friends. He didn't know who else was going, but the thought that he would be outcasted in such a group frequently passed his mind. If it wasn't for Tom, and his frequent reminders, Harry might have pretended to forget about the whole thing and not go.

On the night of the gathering, Harry was laying in bed when he saw Orion make his way downstairs. He sighed, because Harry knew his friend wanted to come along too. Ever since Harry had mentioned it to him, Orion had begged Harry to ask Tom if he could join as well—Harry realized it meant a lot to his friend, as Tom was popular, and Orion seemed to want to live up to his families expectations. But Harry had suggested instead that Orion should ask Tom himself—Harry knew from experience that Tom valued a person more if they asked for things directly, instead of having another person do it. So Orion was likely asking Tom now. Harry didn't know how he felt about it, but it was somewhat relieving to be having a friend come along with him.

Tom's signal happened to be in the form of a small whistling sound. After Orion came back, they waited for ten minutes after Lestrange quietly left the dormitory, then headed out themselves.

It didn't take long until they found the room located on the third floor. The castle was quiet this evening, with few patrols out. They waited an hour in the darkness of the room, just ten minutes before midnight, before everyone who was supposed to be there arrived at the meeting spot. Tom arrived last, shutting the door firmly behind him and casting spell after spell to make the room silent and unnoticeable.

When the candles flew on all at once, Harry was taken aback by how beautiful the room looked in the light. Tom must have cleaned it up, and added furniture for his new club. There was emerald green banners across the walls and ceiling, and a regal looking table sitting in the middle covered by a black tablecloth. There were chairs gathered around it, although the one at the head of the table seemed to be reserved for Tom, as it was the most decorative chair of the lot.

Harry wasn't sure where he was sitting when everyone started to take a seat. He looked over to Orion to find him equally perplexed. There was only eight people in total, including Tom, but just when Harry was going to take one of the back chairs, Tom came up behind him and directed Harry to the space beside him at the front, across from Abraxas. Harry took the offered seat, and as the only available one for Orion was at the very end of the table, he took that one, giving Harry a small smile of reassurance.

“Welcome, to the first meeting of the Knights of Walpurgis” Tom began once he too was seated, and all members of the club looked at Tom with reverence and respect.

Harry wasn't sure if he imagined it or not, but he thought he saw a glint of red in Tom's eyes—surely, though, it was a trick of the light, because just as suddenly as it came, it was gone.

---

Tom held the first meeting with his new Knights setting up boundaries between them, assigning some menial tasks, and telling them what sort of activities they would be doing,

and what the club aimed to do in the long term. He told them it was the start of their own kind of revolution. Tom watered down some of the things he *actually* planned on doing, simply because he wasn't sure of Harry's reaction. After all, the boy had never willingly spent much time with Tom and his 'friends', and Tom himself never let on his true opinions about certain things when Harry was around. So he gauged Harry's facial expression as the meeting took place—would he not like the things Tom planned to do? Would he hate Tom after this? Tom didn't think so, but it was always difficult to tell with Harry.

He watched the boy throughout the meeting, from his surprised looks, to wariness, eventually to a stoic face, which was what Tom was most worried by. He knew Harry could be stubborn, and that the boy held onto ridiculous notions of what was, by his terms, 'right' and 'wrong'.

When it was nearly two in the morning, Tom sent everyone away, but at intervals, in the same way they arrived. This time, however, Tom made Harry leave first, and Orion leave last. The Black heir still had a vow to give, after all.

He also wanted to see how willing the Black heir was to join, and to what extremes he would go to please Tom.

Tom knew that this vow didn't necessarily require someone to kneel, but he commanded Orion do just that. The boy looked hesitant to follow Tom's first command, but then he obliged, and Tom smiled, all teeth.

He knew he could manipulate the boy to do nearly anything, if he wanted to both keep his friendship with Harry and earn respect in the eyes of his family. All the cards lay with Tom.

They finished the vow, and Orion looked a little pale afterwards. Not merely because he owed Tom his loyalty, but because Tom had also included that the boy had an obligation to report to Tom first on anything that he deemed important. Maybe now the Black boy was thinking just how far this could extend, or what Tom would even want to know. Well, Tom had years to decide just how far to push this particular vow. It wasn't an Unbreakable vow, but certainly, Tom's magic was strong enough to potentially render the boy a squib if he broke his new constraints.

And all Tom had to promise was to include the boy in his circle of friends and club. And that was easy.

Too easy.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry this one took me a while, thank you for all the comments, I always enjoy reading them, hope someone likes this, hopefully next chapter we get to see more of Hogwarts, and maybe Dumbledore too lol :)



# Chapter 20

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

To say that Harry was disappointed in Tom's club was a massive understatement. He was angry at Tom, for not telling him his plans, yes, and also for even *attempting* to include him in-in what exactly? His plans to take over the country? But Harry was also angry at himself—for not realizing Tom's truer nature, for being naïve about his friend, for thinking his friend had grown out of that stage in his life where he needed to be number one. It was all going too far, and Harry wanted out. If Tom was going to run his little club, then Harry wanted nothing to do with it. If Tom wanted to start a revolution on Wizarding Britain, then fine. But Harry wasn't going to be a part of it.

Harry didn't go back to the dormitory straight after the meeting. Instead he walked the fine line between getting caught after hours and needing that desperate time to think by himself.

He didn't know where he was going. He walked by windows and towers, climbed stairs and stairs until he was practically running away from it all. By the time Harry realized where he was, he was on the seventh floor corridor by that ludicrous tapestry of trolls being taught to dance.

Harry knew Tom. They had grown up together. When his aunt and uncle abandoned him, Tom was there for him. He was Harry's first real friend, and Harry would always appreciate Tom for that.

But at the same time, Harry knew Tom wasn't a good person. He was vengeful, spiteful, cruel and malicious. He always got his way, whether anyone said differently or not.

Harry wished he didn't have to go back to the dormitory tonight. But even as the thought came into his head, Harry heard the distinct sound of a door clicking behind him. He turned, and on the blank stretch of wall where there shouldn't have been a door, a solid doorway miraculously stood.

Harry raised a curious eyebrow, and then, without thinking of the consequences, cautiously opened the room.

He smiled when he saw a nice looking bed inside, and decided to stay for the night.

If only all his problems could be so easily solved.

---

Tom didn't immediately go back to the Slytherin dormitory after vowing Orion into his service. He had things to think about, and more often than not, wished to be alone to sort out his thoughts.



Harry wasn't pleased. Of that, Tom was certain. But when was the boy ever pleased with Tom's plans?

When they were younger, Tom had the advantage of being Harry's sole friend. He could manipulate Harry into doing what he wanted, and Harry always came back to him. But now, with Orion and Prince in the picture, things had changed. Harry had grown, much to Tom's dislike, fond of his so-called 'friends'. Tom couldn't physically lift a finger against them when Harry was so enthralled with their company. But now that he had Orion under his thumb, Tom mused, he could play their game. Prince wasn't as clingy to Harry as Orion was. With Orion's vow, he could use the Black heir to persuade Harry to stay by his side.

Without thinking, Tom's mind felt for the connection he shared with the boy. He stopped when he noticed that Harry was not that far away, and indeed, only a few corridors from where Tom stood. Had he not gone back to the dormitory? It was currently past one in the morning. Tom decided to follow the connection, tracing Harry down to the seventh floor corridor. However, once he got there (and Tom was *not* rushing, if he happened to be a little out of breath, well, that was a matter he could not help), he noticed a door where previously there had never been a door.

Peculiar. How strange.

His mind rushed to the possibilities of an unknown doorway that Tom did not already know about. Maybe this was the entrance to the chamber? No, it couldn't be. Tom figured it would be closer to the ground, not all the way up here.

Regardless on his wonder, Tom could barely feel the connection through the doorway. Harry must have gone into the room. But just as Tom was about to go inside too, the door vanished from sight. As though there had never been a door at all.

Tom narrowed his eyes. He did not like it when something (even his beloved Hogwarts) shielded him from the boy. Well, Harry would come back to the dormitory eventually. He had to. Whatever he was doing, Tom would simply have to wait.

With a turn of his heel, Tom swiftly headed back to the dungeons. It would not do for his perfect record to shatter simply because he was caught after hours.

Once he was in back in the dormitory, Tom headed off to bed, falling asleep, this time, without any dreams.

---

In second year, Tom had posed a question to his charms teacher that would later prove to be a nightmare when searching the library, and would cast doubt on his mind for years to come.

"Is it possible, professor, to summon a person?" Tom had asked after class, "Say, if they were in an entirely different location and space? I know—"

"Summon a person? Why would you want to...but no, no, Mr. Riddle, it's not possible to do so, unless you both agree to it and cast the appropriate rituals beforehand."

Tom frowned at the answer, but went on,

“But what if it was a feat of accidental magic? Do you still think—“

“Accidental magic? As in a child’s magic? No, I don’t think such a thing would be possible. A child’s magical core is growing, true, but I’ve never heard of such magic happening before, and if it did, I am sure it would be something extraordinary. To answer your question, though, I do not believe it is possible to summon a person.”

And so Tom had left with a sour taste in his mouth, convinced as he was that he was right, and that it *was* possible, no matter what his teacher said about it. Now, however, in fourth year, after scouring the library from top to bottom, Tom had to concede on some level. Summoning a person was just unheard of, but downright impossible without some kind of potion or previous connection. And as Tom had no interaction with Harry prior to Tom’s wish, such a thing should not have happened. It was impossible. The only thing Tom could think of was Harry’s scar. It was such a strange scar too, the way it reacted to Tom’s touch, but the boy said he’d had it since before he met Tom.

When Tom awoke to find Harry’s bed still empty from the previous night, he vowed to find an answer to his little enigma.

Yes, Tom would find an answer to it all, one way or another.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the wait, in this one not much happens, but I hope to get around to some fun things soon...maybe I will post again soon, everything is crazy right now but I hope things get better....thank you for reading and comments :)

# Chapter 21

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Harry was ignoring him, that much was obvious. When the boy finally came back to the Slytherin common room in the early morning hours, rushing to grab his bag for the start of classes, he visibly turned the other way when he saw Tom approaching. Then, after grabbing his things, the boy raced back towards the entrance, passed by a startled Tom, and headed out the door. Tom would have been angry if he hadn't expected as much. But Tom could also play this game. Signalling to Abraxas that it was time to head to class too, he made his way out of the common room. If Harry wanted to ignore Tom, then Tom could also ignore Harry.

It was simple....

If only it remained simple.

Harry bluntly sat on the opposite side of the classroom for Charms, but when it came time for Transfiguration, Dumbledore paired them together to perform the task of returning a teacup back into its original rat form. The boy was not a natural at transfiguring objects, and that was plainly obvious as Harry took a total of ten minutes just to get a tail poking out of his cup. Tom, on the other hand, had already succeeded on his first try. But instead of helping Harry like he normally did, Tom simply sat there and watched. To add to the tension of not speaking to one another, Harry's cup had taken the opportunity to bite Tom's hand when he wasn't looking, which caused him to jump as the cup smashed on the ground, his finger swelling an angry red. When all eyes turned towards the pair, Dumbledore had the audacity to take points off of *Tom* for not 'helping his partner', and for 'poor behavior in smashing the cup'. It was infuriating.

Tom had stormed out of the classroom after that. But if he thought that would be the end of his troubles, he was sorely mistaken. When lunch came around, Harry chose to sit with Orion and Prince, which was not an altogether unusual scene. What made Tom scowl, however, was that Harry was openly chatting with Dumbledore, and laughing with a smile he rarely saw on the boy. Tensions were already high amongst his inner circle, who could clearly see the cause of their leader's wrath; Abraxas visibly winced when Tom suddenly stabbed his meat with a forceful gesture.

It was not a good day.

---

Harry didn't talk to Tom at all that morning, even after finding the most amazing room he had ever seen. But Harry also knew it couldn't last forever, and if Transfiguration had not been so horrible, Harry might have caved and talked to Tom after all was said and done. As it was, Tom angrily rushed out of the classroom before Harry could even say a word. Still, he didn't feel too bad about what had happened in class—it wasn't his fault his teacup had managed to find a pair of teeth, or that Dumbledore had taken points off Tom, not Harry. And

Tom was just as stubborn, if not more so, than Harry ever was. If someone was going to apologize, he decided then and there, it wasn't going to be him.

So Harry stubbornly lasted the rest of the day, talking only to Orion and Eileen, and when Harry decided to eat dinner in the kitchens, he even made a new friend—a house-elf by the name of Dotty. He knew Tom wouldn't approve of talking to the little elves, let alone befriending them, but that just made Harry want to even more. The little elf had seemed unique to him, amongst all the other identical elves, wearing a small little brown sock, and even giving Harry a hug on his way out.

Orion was both amused and puzzled by the elf's strange behavior, living in a pure-blood household for most of his life. Eileen, however, was much more like Harry, and was completely besotted with the little creatures.

Harry had told his troubles to his friends earlier in the evening. Orion was acting a little strange, saying that he should probably make up with Tom soon, and that the Knights of Walpurgis probably wasn't as bad as Harry was thinking. Harry was a bit annoyed at that but didn't say anything.

On their way back to the dungeons, Harry made another decision.

"I'll see you guys later. I want to just check something in the library if that's okay."

"Sure, but don't be late. You know curfew starts in—" Eileen was saying, but Harry was already walking away, back the way they had come.

"Okay, I promise I won't get caught!"

"Harry!"

In truth, Harry wasn't going to the library. Instead he wanted to test out his theory on the room he had discovered the night before.

And if Harry didn't show up in the dormitory later that night, or even the following week, well, who could blame him?

---

Tom Riddle hated his name. It was such a vile thing, to be related to a muggle, to be *named* after a muggle, that he wished for nothing more than to craft himself a new one. But such a thing would take time, and Tom knew he had limited time. With the muggle war escalating, and Grindelwald rising in power, Tom knew that death was always just around the corner, that is, if one didn't protect themselves first. Tom did not want to go back to the orphanage, but this year he had plans. Plans to eliminate his disgusting muggle heritage. Besides, he knew Dumbledore and Dippet would probably reject his request to stay over the summer holidays again. Tom had even brought Harry along, once, for extra sympathy from Dumbledore, and the man still refused to give them any reprieve. Tom was sure Dumbledore had caught his look of loathing as they left the headmasters office that day, almost a year ago. Tom had been particularly testy the whole summer too, after that.

When a week passed by since Harry and Tom had started to ignore each other, and when Harry still had yet to show up in their dormitory at night, Tom took to following him one day to that secret room he was not supposed to know about. For that was where Tom suspected Harry was going. He watched curiously as the boy walked back and forth in front of the blank wall, then, to his utter surprise, a door manifested. Harry ran to open it, and Tom did not waste a second to grab the door handle too before it disappeared like last time.

“Wow, this time it’s—”

Tom didn’t hear what else Harry was saying, because his shock must have been so apparent that he let his guard down. Harry had turned around so fast, wand in hand, but then relaxed his posture when he realized who it was.

Tom, meanwhile, was looking around the room with wide, greedy eyes, taking in everything he saw. He knew of no room so big and spacious that was not the Head Boy or Head Girl’s room, with a bed so large, or with a small library in the corner with a fireplace, nor with a bathroom that looked so suspiciously like the Prefect’s bathroom that Tom was taken aback for a moment.

“Tom, what are you doing here?”

Turning his attention back to the boy, Tom spoke, adding a hint of hesitancy to his tone and features.

“I wanted to chat. I think it’s about time one of us stopped this nonsense.”

And his boy was so precious, wasn’t he, when he looked so confused by Tom’s actions. Tom loved surprising the boy, watching his face morph behind those glasses from pure bewilderment, to anxiety, and then finally to guilt.

“I-I agree, Tom, it’s just that—”

“No, I understand Harry. You don’t like my club. That’s fine. You don’t have to join if you don’t want to. I just thought I’d offer you the chance to get to know my friends a little better, that’s all.”

And it *was* fine, wasn’t it? If the boy was so set against his club, well, Tom would just have to use some other mechanisms to ensure he stayed by his side. Besides, Tom didn’t think he could continue to downplay his true ambitions any longer, if only for Harry’s sake. No, he needed something else. Something powerful. Something—

“Tom, I don’t know how to say this exactly...b-but you scare me sometimes...”

“I scare you?” Tom repeated, looking incredulous, but inside, knowing how perceptive Harry really was.

“It’s just like those times at Wool’s...I-I know you try to hide it from me, but I know how you are... sometimes. I just wish—”

Tom didn't let Harry finish his sentence, and instead he grabbed Harry's hand and led him over to the couch by the fireplace. The boy was openly crying now, and Tom didn't know how well to handle him. Sitting them both down, Tom watched very carefully as Harry spoke again.

"Just promise me Tom...promise me you won't do anything stupid and—and get yourself into trouble. Promise me you won't die doing something as risky as revolution...just—just promise you won't hurt other people...but most of all...please, please, don't hurt yourself..."

And Tom could have lied. He could have assured Harry and said what the boy so desperately wanted to hear. But Tom also knew that Harry could tell when he was lying. It was a trait he picked up from spending so long in Tom's company at Wool's. Tom felt like smiling, too. Here the boy was so worried about Tom's safety. Tom's well-being. It simply encouraged Tom that he needed something powerful to keep Harry tied to him. Just when he was about to speak, however, Harry held up a hand.

"Don't answer that now, Tom..." Harry said, "Just remember it. Can you do that?"

Looking into Harry's green eyes, Tom surprised even himself when he heard his voice answer, and knew it was nothing but the truth.

"Of course."

## Chapter End Notes

hope everyone is okay, I hope someone likes the chapter, thank you for the reviews, I always enjoy reading them :)

# Chapter 22

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Harry and Tom didn't leave the room that night. While Harry slept on the bed, Tom, being the night person that he was, didn't feel tired. Instead he laid beside Harry, watching the dying embers in the fireplace, thinking of the things Harry had said, but also thinking about his next move.

He needed to find the Chamber. He needed to prove his superiority to those who still called him weak. He wanted this first, above all else; to prove his lineage, and to prove to himself that he was the rightful heir of Slytherin. He would get rid of the *muggles* staining his name, and then he would craft himself a new one.

And Harry thought he was a danger to himself if he continued down this path. How silly. But... endearing, nevertheless. No, Tom was not a danger to himself. He had plans, and those plans involved seeking a means *against* death. If Harry was worried he would die, he need not be. Tom wouldn't go as far to say he was *afraid* of death, no, but he certainly didn't enjoy the... finality of it either.

Pulling out his notebook, the one Harry had given him long ago, he wrote down some of his ideas for the future. When he was finished, he laid back down, intending to go to sleep. He didn't stop to wonder what his housemates would think when both he and Harry failed to show up for bed. He only prayed that Abraxas wouldn't start any foolhardy rumors.

That night, Tom fell into another dream. By the time he awoke, Tom would have a lot to reconsider.

---

Tom opened his eyes and took in the lavish room in front of him. Already sitting was the man Tom had seen in his previous dreams, although he was a little different now. No longer serpentine like before, while the man was still pale and skeletal, and clearly growing back a nose, the dark hair, the dark glint of red eyes...he held a striking resemblance to Tom himself, that left him furious for answers.

Even if he knew the answers therein, he couldn't quite stop himself from asking the question again.

"Who are you?" Tom demanded, while the hesitant part of himself, the one that *knew* he wasn't but still desperate to be proven wrong, to ask anyway, evidence be damned.

"Are... you my father?"

A look that bordered on angry passed over the man, an impatient narrowing of his eyes.

“No child, I am not your father. Do not ask me that again. Now *sit*. We have much to discuss.”

Tom sat on the edge of his seat. He hated being told what to do, much less being called a *child*, but the fact of the matter was that the man in front of him was powerful, far more powerful than Tom. Even if it was just a dream, Tom would obey, but only just.

“I warned you of Dumbledore. I told you to keep the boy close. Have you been doing these things? Tell me, boy, what you have been up to.”

This encounter felt far more personal than Tom’s dreams before. Before, his dreams consisted of the man warning him of Dumbledore, of Harry’s safety, with the expectation that Tom would obey the orders in time. But now they were sitting in a comfortable room, holding an actual conversation, and Tom was being asked to reply.

So Tom raised an elegant eyebrow, crossed his arms, and said in a lofty tone,

“I’ve been researching my past. Harry’s past too. I’ve been looking for the Chamber of Secrets. It’s the most important—”

“I know the *importance* of the Chamber, but that does not answer my question” the man interrupted him angrily, much to Tom’s ire, “So you’ve been, shall we say, *neglecting* my tasks? Is this a correct assumption?”

“No.” Tom scoffed, irritation with the man growing every second, “I’ve heard your prattling about Dumbledore for years. The fool won’t do anything. And Harry has always been mine. You can sleep now, old man.”

The man stayed quiet for a time after Tom’s little outburst, merely giving him a cool look, which made Tom’s nerves prickles down his spine and a small amount of sweat trail down his neck.

“And yet” the man started coldly, jolting Tom alert, while the man’s crimson eyes narrowed in contempt, “I have sources telling me that Dumbledore is close to taking action. And while you dwindle away your time looking for the Chamber, a Chamber that has been sitting untouched for *centuries*, Harry has been growing closer to others, not you. Add to that, the boy has been talking to Dumbledore, a thought which does not amuse me, as I gave you clear instructions to keep the boy by your side and out of harms way.”

“I—”

“Enough.” the man said sharply, “Time does not favor either of us right now. I hope that after tonight you will re-evaluate your plans. Besides that, I have a new task for you—one in which you *will* fulfill, as it corresponds to both of our desires.”

Then the man got up, and Tom backed away on the seat, but the man simply walked around the room and took out a book on the shelf behind him. Gliding over, he handed it to Tom, who took the offered book gingerly in his hands. Who knew if it was cursed?



“Find that book in the Restricted Section. I have no doubt you may have already seen it, or at the very least, attempted to read it. I want you to perform the spell on page 318. Perform it on Harry. You will know what to do. If you want the boy to live, then you must do it.”

“What do you mean?” Tom asked through a strange pain in his heart. It was the cave all over again, and his breathing quickened to near gasps at the possibility.

“Calm down, child. The boy is far from dead. But you must act now rather than later... before Dumbledore takes him away and uses the boy against you.”

At that, Tom’s heart rate slowed down, and he asked again, this time more sharply, more aware, “What do you mean? Why do I have to perform this spell? Who are you, and how do you know—”

“Perform the spell. It will answer some of your more... immediate questions regarding the boy. And I know many things, Tom. After all....”

He gave Tom a knowing look, then, and Tom felt fear for the first time in a long time. It was as though all his earlier speculations had drawn him to this conclusion, as though the world were spinning a false tale and this...this was the answer. The man wasn’t his father. No, that was impossible. Because his father was a muggle.

This man...was him? *This* was Tom’s future? An old man talking to himself through a dreamscape? What about his plans, his ploys for domination, his Knights, his—

“Don’t be naïve. Of course we would have succeeded, if not for Dumbledore and his *prophecy*.” the man spat, “But no, we *will* succeed if you do as I say.”

With that final remark, the man dismissed him, and as the room began fading to black, Tom awoke to the sound of Harry shaking him, looking pale in the morning light.

“I heard you mumbling and tossing in the bed. I thought you were having a nightmare. I thought—”

Tom took a few deep breaths, then stared into Harry’s hazy image.

He remembered the dream, so vivid, so startlingly clear, in a way that his dreams hadn’t been in a long time. His heart was still thumping madly against his chest, but when he looked back at Harry, who was looking down at him so earnestly, so trusting, so sincere— a faint blush on his cheeks, his black hair wild and messy from sleep, chewing on his lips in nervousness and Tom just wanted to—

Tom spoke calmly, a mask easily slipping onto his face to hide his traitorous thoughts from even forming.

“I’m fine.”

## Chapter End Notes

I hope this chapter's alright, I maybe want to focus on Harry a little more in the next chapters...I made the timeline a little complicated but hopefully it turns out understandable lol I hope everyone is okay, and thanks for the comments :)

# Chapter 23

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The following days after Harry and Tom had spent the night in the room, Tom was acting suspiciously...nice, and while Harry still had his doubts, he sincerely hoped that his words had finally impacted Tom in a meaningful way. He wasn't a *complete* fool though, and he was sure it wasn't the only thing on his mind. Tom was hiding something, Harry felt sure. He didn't know how to explain his suspicions other than a gut instinct which was usually right.

It was in the middle of October that Harry suddenly found himself very busy, between Quidditch and homework and *Tom*, that he struggled to get any decent sleep, never mind actually caring what Tom was up to these days. Harry was currently sitting in the common room with Tom's circle of friends, while struggling to stay awake and finish his potion's homework. Tom had kept inviting him to sit with his friends over the past few days, and Harry felt oddly guilty if he didn't spend time with his childhood friend, especially when Tom was usually the one who had other things to do. They all spoke in low, soft tones that made Harry sleepy. Lestrangle kept casting him wary glances, while Avery and Dolohov were practicing spell work, and Abraxas looked vaguely amused by something, a languid smirk resting on his pale, blonde features.

When Harry looked over at Tom, the older boy was reading something, and when he caught Harry looking, he quickly shuffled the book out of view and into his school bag.

While Harry would normally ask, this time he let it go. He was too tired to care, and besides—it wasn't like Harry wanted to come across as Tom's keeper. Tom could read whatever he wanted to, it had nothing to do with Harry; although he *did* wish Tom would keep his reading of dark arts to a minimum.

The common room slowly trickled out of people as time went on. Harry slowly but surely finished his homework, and although it wasn't perfect, he felt better now that it was done.

He hadn't noticed when he was working, but the common room was now completely empty, except for their group by the fire. Tom wasn't reading anymore, and when Harry looked over, he noted with embarrassment that Tom was watching him, but for how long, Harry wasn't sure.

Harry was just about to get up and leave—and Tom's friends looked hostile in the dim lighting, and all of them were staring, waiting—when Tom stopped him.

"Harry, stay. The rest of you may go. Goodnight." Tom waved a dismissive hand, and Harry was kind of startled when they all agreed so easily, and effectively left Harry and Tom alone in a matter of minutes.

“What’s this about?” Harry asked tiredly, rubbing his eyes. He really was exhausted and hoped that whatever Tom wanted to ask him didn’t require too much thinking.

“I won’t keep you long. I merely wished to ask you something that may be a bit... sensitive, and I did not want the others eavesdropping.”

“What is it?” Harry asked, a little bit cautiously.

“Well...”

---

Tom was occasionally reckless, and this time was no different. The book he had searched for in the library, the one from his dream, had turned out to be the one book he could not find in the restricted section. It was with no amount of fury when he realized where it had gone...that *Dumbledore* had taken it off the shelves when Tom wasn’t looking. He knew this because he had gone into the man’s office one day, searching for where the book could have gone, asking him a vague school related question...when he saw the offending item sitting on the man’s back shelf, surrounded by other innocent, *Light* topics, but Tom was no fool. He hadn’t realized until this point how dangerous *Dumbledore* could be and wondered if the man was somehow plotting against him and Harry.

So he stole the book from right under *Dumbledore*’s nose. After hours, of course. Surprisingly, the man hadn’t done anything to retrieve it, other than give Tom stupidly knowing looks, as though he hadn’t already guessed who had stolen it.

So Tom had stolen the book, but not without apprehension and a subtle amount of... concern, if that was the right word.

For how was Harry connected to all of this?

When Tom turned to the page noted in his dream, he felt...odd. He had been thinking of making one himself, after all. But this spell, ritual, was...slightly different from making a *horcrux*...it was—

And when Tom finally understood it, he had all but thrown the book down in a rage. How *dare* his future self even suggest—! He would not—he would *never*—

But then that traitorous voice in his head spoke up, and Tom nearly snarled.

*Isn’t this the only way for Harry to live by your side? And why would your future self suggest it, if not for a good reason?*

Even still, Tom would never—not to *Harry*—he could not—

*Yes, you can. You will. And don’t you want Harry to live forever too?*

*Of course* he did. But there had to be another way...something less...less....

His thoughts turned, and eventually, he settled into something that resembled calm.

Yes, Tom could do it... for Harry's sake...if it had to be done... for while Tom could trust little in this world, he did trust in himself....

And he wouldn't do anything...he wouldn't do to himself first...

---

"Well..." Tom moved until he was sitting on the sofa next to Harry. Harry looked apprehensive but was watching him curiously.

"I was wondering... what you can tell me about your scar...and have you ever... felt anything from it?"

Harry looked shocked, but recovered quickly, nevertheless.

"Y-yes...I have... b-but how do you—"

And for the first time in over a year, Tom reached forwards and touched the scar he had avoided for far too long.

Tom felt an immediate thrill race through him, a wave of intense magic settling around him, beckoning him closer. Yes, this was it. This was the answer he'd been looking for. Harry was—impossible—but he was...the boy had a piece of Tom's *soul*. Impossible, but he was certain this was the answer his future self had been hinting at, with the spell he had to perform. But why was he—*how* was he—

He watched, delighted, when Harry closed his eyes and leaned forward, clearly feeling the same thing Tom was. With hesitation, Tom retracted his hand, and the feeling vanished. But the lingering aftertaste of magic was still washing over him.

Harry opened his eyes, wide and panicked.

"T-That was..."

"Yes, I felt it too. I was thinking about what it meant and—"

"I-I think I s-should go...I-I'm feeling tired and—" Harry interrupted him, flushed cheeks and stumbling to his feet. Tom was taken aback, before he schooled his expression into one of concern.

"Very well. Although we should at least talk about it later when you are not so...tired."

"O-Okay...goodnight Tom!" Harry nervously left the room, the boy practically running up the steps.

Tom watched him go with a strained feeling in his chest. He hadn't meant to scare the boy. He hoped they could talk more about it, to see what exactly Harry felt when Tom touched his scar. He was sure Harry felt the same things, maybe even more, considering he was—

While these thoughts continued, he took out the book from his schoolbag. He hummed softly to himself as he thought about his plans, rereading the chapter his future self had marked, for good measure. It was short, barely any details, considering the nature of the spell and the dark magic it required.

He would do it to himself first, and then if everything worked out, he would perform the spell on Harry and—

He needed an object, though. Something...meaningful. He needed a sacrifice too. That wouldn't be a problem, considering he was planning on meeting his 'father' sometime in the summer.

However, Tom could never have predicted the catastrophe that would ensue, forcing him into action, nor the conflicting feelings he would have. Tom could never have predicted the mess that he would find himself in, or the events that would follow like a trail of fiendfyre....

## Chapter End Notes

I hope this chapter's alright, I hope things are okay with everyone...I think we're getting to an intense point in the story, hopefully I can write it ok, but I want a few things to happen first, some good moments etc. :)

# Chapter 24

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When Harry retreated to the dorm, his heart would not stop pounding. He *knew* Tom, but to think that Harry would have that kind of reaction to—

*Did he like Tom...? As more... than a friend...?*

The answer, however, was stuck in his throat, and even as he felt guilty for leaving the room so suddenly, Harry squashed down his feelings into a tight ball, forcing him to swallow against the all-consuming anxiety threatening to devour him whole. He wasn't ready yet. Not in the slightest.

His thoughts eventually returned to what had happened when Tom touched his scar. Harry had, over the years, felt the same feelings in the deepest parts of his dreams. However, he had always assumed it was just another part of his strange dreams—he remembered Tom touching his scar all those years ago, but he never fully thought about it and what it could mean.

It felt both frightening and exhilarating, to have such a connection to Tom. Why did it exist? How was it even possible?

That answer too seemed lodged in his mind, and no matter how hard he thought about *how* such magic was possible, he couldn't come to a cohesive answer.

Did Tom know the answer? Well, maybe that was what he had wanted to talk to Harry about....

Settling himself with a determination to talk to Tom tomorrow, when he was fully prepared and calm, Harry went to sleep.

---

The next morning, however, Tom was nowhere to be found. His bed was neatly made, and when Harry had daringly asked Abraxas, the Malfoy heir had only given him a cool look that made Harry grind his teeth. Tom wasn't at breakfast either, which annoyed Harry far more than it should have. So Harry sat with Orion, while Eileen was off doing some extracurricular work for Professor Slughorn.

When it was finally time for Defense class, Tom still didn't show up until the very last minute, and by that time, his friend was totally absorbed in his role as a model student and had no time for Harry's questioning glances. When Merrythought let them out early for lunch, after a rigorous theoretical lesson with no dueling practice, Harry barely saw a trace of Tom's hair as he walked out the door.

At lunch, Harry sat again with Orion while Tom walked in late halfway through. Then, just as Tom was starting to eat, a muggleborn Ravenclaw girl named Myrtle Warren, with large glasses and a blushing, nervous face, tried to talk to Tom by asking him if he could tutor her—Tom didn't even blink before he shot her down, and not before he gave her a condescending smirk that spoke volumes. She didn't quite seem to get it, though, and Harry was visibly shaking with laughter when she tried to ask Tom out on a date instead—Tom bristled at the sound of his laughter, and then, very coldly, told the girl to leave him alone. With the violent look in Tom's eyes and his lips pressed in a firm line, the girl quickly scampered back to her own table. To the amusement of the entire Slytherin table (Harry only heard *half* of the jokes being passed around after that encounter), he also felt a small amount of pity for the girl. She clearly didn't know Tom, but at the same time, he didn't have to be so mean.

After lunch, they had double potions, and Harry's miserable attempts at scrounging up a decent grade for the class turned out to be not so bad when he was paired up with Orion. Sure, he was no Tom, but he was better than dealing with Goyle, who had botched every single potion so far in the semester. Tom always preferred to work by himself anyways, and with his status as the number one student in his class, combined with his place in the Slug Club, meant that Professor Slughorn always turned a blind eye to the fact that Tom had rarely ever had a potions partner.

After classes, Harry had Quidditch practice, with a game next Saturday evening against Gryffindor. He hadn't seen Tom all day but vowed to himself to talk to him after practice. As Harry was walking down the second-floor corridor, he spotted the girl Tom had torn down at lunch heading into the girl's bathroom, crying. Harry instantly felt bad for laughing at her attempts to go out with Tom on a date, and also vowed that if he saw the girl again, he would try and be nice.

When Harry finally got back from Quidditch and finished showering, he sat down next to Tom in the common room, which was, at this time, mostly empty. Tom was, as usual, reading, but when he saw Harry he put the book away.

"Tom, where were you today? I didn't see—"

And if Harry had ever thought he was calm and ready to talk to Tom about his scar, it was nothing compared to how flustered he suddenly became when Tom reached out to touch it, but then, seeming to think about it, stopped halfway.

"May I?"

Harry was sure his entire face was red. What was *wrong* with him?

"S-Sure, go ahead."

And then when Tom's fingers brushed past his fringe, he felt that feeling again. That feeling of pure blissfulness, like everything inside of him was connected to Tom and Tom to him. He sighed deeply at the touch. He didn't know what it was, but whatever it was, it was profound magic that connected them. When Harry dared to open his eyes, he saw Tom looking equally disorientated, his face leaning in, his eyes wide and looking as though he had



to physically stop himself from continuing to touch the scar, he let go. Harry felt like a wave of deep contentment had just washed over him.

“W-What is it? Do you have any ideas?” Harry asked after a few moments had passed between them.

“So you do feel it. That’s what I thought.” He smiled at that, then, “You said you got in in a car crash?” Tom looked skeptical at the notion, and Harry thought so too. How could such a magical scar be connected to a muggle car crash?

“Well, I remember...lots of green light, and a woman screaming. But now I’m not so sure. I-It can’t be a simple car crash, can it?”

“No Harry. I’m sure that’s not it.” Tom looked thoughtful, and they lapsed into silence once again.

“So where were you today? I didn’t see you, and you were late for lunch.” Harry asked instead, perhaps to ease the slight amount of nervousness he felt. Why was he feeling so embarrassed around his friend? It wasn’t usually like this, but ever since Tom had touched his scar the other day, Harry felt as though he was subconsciously watching Tom and nervous for his reactions.

“Hm? Oh, I was just...testing something. It’s nothing, Harry, you needn’t worry.”

“Right, well, what do you think caused this, then? Do you have any ideas?” Harry was suspicious, but let it go in favour of talking about their connection. He knew Tom was smart, way smarter than Harry, so he wondered what the other boy thought about it, and what kind of magic could cause such a connection.

Tom leaned back in the chair and looked at Harry with a small smile tracing his lips.

“What do you know about souls, Harry?”

---

Albus Dumbledore liked to think of himself as a good role model. He taught his students to the best of their abilities, and even pushed them to perform far beyond what they had ever hoped to achieve—indeed, Albus liked to think of himself as a wizard every student could look up to.

But not every student liked Albus, much to his regret. He knew he had a...well, more than a preference towards those of his old house, Gryffindor. And he did have the tendency to be...well, a little harsher towards those of Slytherin house. But it was all within reason. Albus had never purposefully discriminated against a student simply because of their house. No, no there were usually *other* factors that led Albus into distancing himself from a student, or perhaps treating them more coldly than he would of other, more amiable students.

The one example that came to his mind was that of Tom Riddle. Yes, the boy was only a fourth year at the moment, but Albus had not turned a blind eye to the way the boy held himself in school as opposed to the orphanage, how Tom had moved up the Slytherin

hierarchy so subtly, and yet so strikingly fast that it had warranted Albus's attention. Albus was not privy to many of the details, but he had noted the way the other students gravitated towards the boy, a model student in every regard, who held their attention with but a few words. But what worried him most was not the sudden popularity Tom Riddle held, nor the things the boy had the tendency to read in his spare time, but rather...a strange dream he had recently, which spoke not only of Tom Riddle, but of the boy's on-and-off friend, Harry Peters.

Yes, it was not uncharacteristic of Albus to dream. He had many dreams, most of them focused on his past failures, his brother, his sister, or else dreams of terror which included Gellert and the threat he was posing to the wizarding world. Albus knew he had to deal with him eventually. It was the thought of what he would do if they did meet again that held Albus off. For now.

But it was strange indeed to hold a dream of himself, older, as though another entity, speaking to him about things that had not happened yet. Albus knew vaguely of dream magic, and how it was useful in corresponding with past or previous selves. What might have influenced Albus of the future to need to speak with him in such a dangerous way?

It was no secret that dream magic held dangerous consequences. It was such magic that was banned from literary knowledge and held in the deepest parts of the Department of Mysteries, only to be used when someone had, usually accidentally, tampered with time. So why had Albus himself used it to talk about such...strange things?

His future self, if Albus remembered his dream correctly, had talked openly about the dangers of Tom Riddle, and to watch him closely. But more importantly, as his dream had come to an end, he had urged himself, very specifically, to watch over a boy Albus only vaguely knew and talked to, a Mr. Harry Peters. The boy was a Slytherin, muggleborn, and strangely enough, a friend of Tom Riddle. From what Albus had seen, though, the boy did not openly fawn over his friend, like so many others appeared to do. He also did not seem like a member of Tom Riddle's circle, but rather remained a childhood friend, from what Albus could remember of his trip to Wool's orphanage and their subsequent years at Hogwarts.

Harry Peters.

For now, he resolved himself into spending more attention to the boy and lending a hand if needed. And hopefully that would settle Albus's worries and fears. Hopefully, his future self would be satisfied.

But only time would tell....

## Chapter End Notes

sorry this is so late, I didn't mean to put it off for so long, just I had school matters to do first. I hope the chapter is okay. I hope to write more of Harry and his feelings, which I

haven't given much attention to, I realize, in comparison to Tom. I hope to update my other stories soon as well, while I still have some time off of school. Hopefully someone enjoys this :)

# Chapter 25

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

By the time Halloween came and went, and the Christmas holidays were just around the corner, Harry could honestly say he was glad for the break. While Orion and Eileen went back to their families, Harry, Tom, and a few upper year Slytherins stayed at Hogwarts. It was going to be a quiet holiday, but Harry found that he often enjoyed the quiet times and of course, he cherished any moment he could spend alone with Tom. It was...peaceful, and when Harry said goodbye to his friends, he did so with the promise that he would see them again in the new year.

Myrtle Warren was, unsurprisingly, also staying at Hogwarts for the holidays, although perhaps her reasons were not entirely a secret—ever since Tom had rejected her publicly at the Slytherin table, the Ravenclaw witch had taken to openly stalking Tom wherever he went. Harry felt bad for Tom; Tom frequently had to speak to the girl about boundaries, and it seemed, no matter how much or how little attention he gave her, no matter how cruel or cutting his words, Myrtle was still crushing massively on him. Even Harry, as nice as he had been, had found no way to deter Warren from pestering Tom. Tom, however, had simply taken the situation in stride, and often found cruel and malicious ways to keep the pimply girl at bay.

It was on the second night of the holidays that Harry had a sudden inspiration to walk around the castle at night. There was no strict curfew over the holidays, and besides that, Harry simply wanted some time to think by himself. So he made his way out of bed, careful not to wake up Tom, and slipped out into the corridor unseen.

The castle was majestic at this time of night, Harry thought. He decided to go to that special room he had found, on the seventh floor. There, of all places, he could think.

Harry had not known what to think when Tom told him that they were connected by souls, he had said—but then again, Tom had looked somewhat mystified by the idea too. Harry, if possible, became even more flustered around Tom after *that* explanation. It was as if a light switch had gone off in his mind, and now that Harry was aware, actually *aware* of the fact that Tom and Harry were possibly closer in bond than some married couples... was extremely...*awkward*, if that was the right word. Not that he didn't *like* being bonded with Tom—if it were anyone else, Harry would have been enraged—but how the hell did it even *happen* was another thing he didn't know. Harry liked to think of himself as...separate from his friend, and to think that some, or maybe all, of his thoughts were possibly available for Tom as well, made him feel suddenly shy and awkward around his friend. Not to mention how he became when Tom touched his scar— now that was embarrassing!

When Harry passed by a dark window, he didn't notice the footsteps so near to him that, when he crashed into another body, he didn't fully register what had happened until both of them were sprawled against the stone floor.

Even though it was dark, if Harry's glasses weren't deceiving him, it looked like Myrtle Warren, sniffing so loudly that Harry visibly winced— just because the curfew wasn't strict didn't mean he wanted to get caught either. He shushed her, then stood up to help her stand too.

"T-Thank you..." her eyes were as big as saucers when Harry helped her up.

"W-What are you doing here...?" Harry whispered quietly, noting that she seemed to gather herself at his words, and wasn't overly crying any longer.

Then she did something strange, looking around furtively, and said quietly, "Not here. L-Let's go to a quieter place, safer, maybe...I have to tell you something!" Myrtle looked so deranged in the small amount of light that Harry was almost unwilling to follow her. While she openly stalked Tom, it wasn't exactly a secret, what was she doing running around in the middle of the night? It intrigued Harry, so, against his better judgements, he followed her down to the second floor, but stopped just short of heading into the girls' bathroom.

"Wait—it's the girls' bathroom. I can't—not in there—" Harry was blushing, but Myrtle just grabbed his hand and pushed him in.

"It's fine. See? Nobody's here. I have to tell you something, and I can't be sure that anywhere else is safe."

"Safe? From what, exactly?" Harry asked, shifting from foot to foot, uncomfortable being inside the girl's bathroom despite Myrtle's insistence.

She looked pale in the mirror, so pale Harry almost thought she was a ghost, and then whispered,

"I have to tell you something. It's important. It's about Riddle—he's—"

"Wait, this is about Tom? What have I told you Warren— it's no good to stalk—"

"*Stalk!* Who cares, especially if I've discovered some juicy gossip that makes me popular—especially if it's about *Riddle*—but that's not what I was going to tell you. This is more than gossip—it's—"

Suddenly, the bathroom mirror cracked loud and ominous in the chill, making Myrtle scream, if only for a second. Harry jumped too, the thought of someone walking in on them, especially *Tom*, of all people, was making him nervous. He walked over to the sinks to inspect the mirror. It looked like an ordinary mirror; it had probably just cracked because of the cold. But when he looked down to solve the slight mystery, he felt a thrill in his heart when he saw a small snake on one of the taps. He straightened up, realizing he still had company.

\_\_\_ "Look Myrtle, whatever your reasons are, it's not...healthy... to stalk people. Tom is \_\_\_"

“Dangerous! Tom Riddle is dangerous, Harry! There, I said it. I saw him, I’ve watched him restlessly for weeks, I know he’s up to something—I saw what he was reading and—”

“And you think *I* don’t know who Tom is? I’ve known him for most of my childhood, Myrtle, you don’t need to tell me who Tom is. I already know.”

“You already k-know? But then, what are you going to do about—?”

“About Tom? Nothing. It’s not my place to tell him what to do. Now if you’ll excuse me, Myrtle, I’m going back to bed. I suggest you do the same.”

With that, Harry left the girl’s washroom, though not without the thought that he wanted to investigate the bathroom later, thoughts swirling around the mysterious snake-patterned tap. He still remembered the night he and Tom had spent searching for the mythical Chamber of Secrets, with no results. He wanted to tell Tom straightaway, but as he walked back to the dungeons, he decided to keep this one secret to himself.

At least, for a little while.

---

After Harry’s encounter with Myrtle in the bathroom, the girl had also stopped following Tom, much to Harry’s relief. She did still send Harry questioning glances every now and then, but as he was spending most of his holidays with Tom, he didn’t have time to answer her. Tom, for his part, didn’t even seem to notice the girl’s sudden absence, and Harry had to stifle a little laugh when Myrtle sensed this too.

Harry also spent part of his time in the kitchens, and he brought Tom there too, introducing him to Harry’s friend, Dotty. Tom was less than pleased that Harry had decided to make friends with a house-elf, but Harry couldn’t be bothered to care. It made him laugh, if he was being honest, when Tom only scowled deeper.

On Christmas morning, Harry and Tom awoke to sharing presents in the near empty Slytherin common room. Harry, not having much money, had decided to give Tom a free favor as a gift. Any favor, within reason, and Harry would do it. Tom had looked far more pleased with this than Harry expected. Tom, for his part, had actually bought Harry something—though Harry had no idea as to how Tom even had any money. He bought Harry an expensive looking bracelet to replace his old one. While Harry still loved his old bracelet, he couldn’t help but admire Tom’s attention to detail in the new one—this one had snakes engraved on it, and, like the old one, would grow in size as needed. Tom placed it over his wrist so gently that Harry was sure his whole face was red. It didn’t help when his friend leant over to whisper the password into the bracelet either. Harry knew his old one held a password too, because the one time he had tried to take it off Tom had scolded him for abusing his wrist. Harry didn’t mind as much as he thought he might, because to Harry, it was also a sign of their friendship that Harry trusted Tom enough to keep the password.

As New Years came, and with it, Tom’s birthday, they spent the rest of their free time lounging in the peaceful common room, or else reading in the library. When Harry could no longer contain the news that he might have found the Chamber of Secrets in a girl’s bathroom, he spent the whole day thinking about how he should tell Tom. In the end, he

decided to give him the news as a birthday gift. On their way to bed, he told Tom to follow him for his gift, and led him all the way to the girl's bathroom on the second floor.

"What's this about?" Tom asked, suspicious of what Harry was planning. When they stopped in front of the girl's washroom, Tom stared at Harry for a few uncomfortable seconds. Harry laughed at his expression.

"When have you ever gone into a girl's bathroom?"

"You'll see." Harry was snickering when he walked in the doors boldly, with Tom hot on his heels. But Tom was having none of it. He grabbed Harry by the arm before he could reach the sinks.

"Tell me. *Now*."

"Hold on Tom, I was just showing you something—"

"In a girl's bathroom? Tell me when you've been in here."

"It's fine! Myrtle wanted to talk to me and—"

"Oh, Warren, is it? I see."

"Let go, Tom! She was just being paranoid about—about—"

"About?" Tom asked, deceptively innocent with one eyebrow raised, but Harry knew better.

"About you, Tom. Now, if you'll let me go, I wanted to show you something that I *think* you'll love."

At Harry's murderous glare, Tom reluctantly let go, and Harry walked over to the sinks.

"See, it was around here...there was a small—here! A snake, see? I think it's—"

Tom, meanwhile, had gone pale. He was looking at the sinks in an odd way, now that he had seen what Harry was pointing to. A serpent on the engraving of the sinks. If it was what Harry was thinking of, it was possibly a way into the Chamber of Secrets.

"I think it might be something with the Chamber of Secrets." Harry said needlessly, for he could see his friend's mind was whirling with intrigue. Harry knew his friend was somewhat obsessed with finding Salazar's Chamber, so he hoped this was a good gift.

"Tom?" Tom was silent for far too long before he looked over at Harry and smiled. In the dim lighting, it looked somehow off.

"Thank you, Harry. Come. We'll test it later. For now, let's go to bed."

Tom led the way back down to the dungeons, but he was quiet for a long time. And while Harry was bothered by his friend's sudden silence, Tom made up for it by promising they would keep it a secret between them, and that they would test the sinks together when they both had more time.

And if Harry was secretly happy that he didn't have to share the Chamber with anyone else but Tom, he showed it only when they went to sleep, with a soft smile on his face.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this one took me longer than I expected, I still have school so I will update whenever I can. I hope I can update my other stories too, but they are also taking me a while lol. Thanks for all the comments, it makes me happy, I hope this chapter is okay, I'm glad to focus on Harry for a while, and I hope to move along to their fifth year soon :)



# Chapter 26

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Whether he was ready for it or not, the holidays came to an uneventful end. Hundreds of students arrived back at Hogwarts and ruined Harry's peaceful day with Tom. They hadn't explored the Chamber yet, as Tom was relentless in his conviction that there was some kind of monster inside, and that it was dangerous to go down without a plan.

Over the last few days of the holidays, Harry had even pushed Tom on what he thought the monster was, and what sort of plan they needed before going down. But Tom was stubborn, and even despite Harry's needling and prodding, he never revealed his thoughts on what sort of plan he had prepared, or even when they would go down.

When classes started up again, Harry was glad to have Orion back in his life. However, the other boy had come back looking slightly pale and ill. Harry thought it might have to do with Grindelwald and the growing concern over the escalating war. Eileen, though a year younger and in different classes, had also become increasingly distant when classes resumed—she became frazzled when Harry or Orion talked about anything other than potions, and when left to her own devices, she could be seen walking the halls with Professor Slughorn, carrying vials or other ingredients for her extra studies with the potion's master. Harry didn't complain, but he did miss talking with her.

Tom had also become something of a mystery. Whether intentional or not, he seemed... confused and... less sure of himself than he usually was. Harry didn't know what it was, but Tom answered less and less questions from the teachers, was quiet during dinner, and one time Harry thought Tom would say something to him, in the end, the other boy hesitated and went back to his studies.

Time wore on, but instead of getting better, things only got worse. While Harry was busy studying and full of quidditch practices, he barely had time to see what was wrong with his friends. Orion seemed more distant than usual, and Tom was also hesitating at doing *something*, but what, Harry couldn't even fathom. By late February, and with no signs of improving, Harry took Tom randomly by the arm and pushed him into an abandoned classroom during one of their breaks after class. He didn't care for the looks he received, instead glaring at his friend, and telling him, quite blandly, that he should stop worrying over... whatever he was worrying about, and just *talk to him* already. It was maddening, whenever Tom tried to keep everything to himself.

"I know you think you're doing me some sort of favor by *not* telling me what's going on, but this is driving me nuts! You can't go on forever undecided... whatever you're deliberating, just tell me, maybe I can help!" Harry yelled to a surprised Tom, who was looking at him with wide, disbelieving eyes.

After a minute, Tom relaxed, and Harry was almost glad for the familiar arrogant glint to appear in his eyes, something he hadn't seen for nearly two months.

“Are you worried about me?” Tom asked, a smug smile on his face.

“Of course I’m worried, you idiot! I can see you hesitating, and I want to help...maybe—maybe I can’t do much but at least tell me what’s going on...”

“I can’t tell you everything—” Tom began, and Harry bristled, “But... I could use your help with one thing; if you’ll remember, we still have yet to explore the Chamber, and if you are ready, we can—”

“Of course!” Harry said immediately, excited by the mere prospect, “I was ready ages ago!” Harry smiled, and Tom looked remarkably relieved over Harry’s answer. Harry was just glad he could finally help Tom with something they had both promised to do. Even if Tom wouldn’t tell him *everything*, Harry supposed, he was just glad he could help with one thing.

“Alright. Meet me tonight in the common room, I think we should be able to sneak out once everyone has left. I don’t suppose you have any mirrors on you?”

“Mirrors? Why?”

“Just a precaution against a monster I am thinking of. I don’t want to take any unnecessary risks.” And then, Tom did something he had never done before. He leaned forward and planted a small kiss on Harry’s forehead.

“Thank you for worrying about me.” Tom said, laughing at how red Harry had become. “Come, let’s go. I am sure we are almost late for Herbology.”

---

Tom knew Harry was worried for him. Perhaps, even rightly so. But still, Tom had plans, and some of those plans were less than pleasant for Harry’s delicate ears. He knew his boy would be worried, maybe even attempt to stop him, if he knew the full extent of his ideas. It wasn’t as though Tom didn’t trust his Harry with the information, on the contrary, he simply did not wish to...divulge all the gritty and unnecessary details. He wanted to protect Harry just as much, but on the other hand, he knew the truth would come out eventually. Tom simply wanted to be sure he had played all of his cards just the right way before that time ever came.

Harry had found the Chamber for Tom, something that still astounded him. If it were anyone else, he would have obliterated the location from their minds. But because it was Harry, and Harry was technically *his* (his own gift to himself, the special gift Tom had summoned all those years ago), Tom did not touch a hair on the boy’s head, and he knew Harry well enough to know he wouldn’t tell a soul about the possible Chamber location. Harry wished to explore it with Tom, alone, and the idea was mutual.

The only issue was Myrtle Warren, who frequently went into that specific bathroom to cry. Not that the mudblood would ever know the significance of the snake shaped taps, but it was a risk Tom simply wasn’t willing to let go. He deliberated between dealing with her now, or later, and ultimately decided he would obliterate her after he explored the Chamber with Harry.

Tom was tempted, indeed, by the prospect of finally proving his heritage to those who still questioned him. He didn't particularly care for the insults of his older self, he knew this was an important step in his journey to power. He smiled when he realized he was looking forward to tonight, both in the prospect of finding the Chamber, but also in the fact that he was sharing this important moment with the only person he considered special.

Yes, Tom was definitely looking forward to tonight.

---

They didn't have any pocket mirrors, but Harry had found something similarly reflective in the lid of a candy container he had bought from Hogsmeade. Tom didn't mind, he wasn't particularly fond of mirrors, and besides, if they happened upon the monster, then the mirror probably wouldn't do them any good. If they were petrified through the mirror, they wouldn't be able to move, and would likely die as a result. No, Tom wasn't fond of his mirror idea, but it was, surely, better than nothing.

Close to midnight, Tom had disillusioned both him and Harry, and then they walked through the castle holding hands.

"I'm nervous, but excited." Harry had whispered to him in the common room. Now that they were approaching the bathroom, Tom could feel Harry's nervous state through their hands, jittery and shaking, which he tried to soothe by rubbing small circles with his thumb.

"If you wish to go back—"

"No! I'm just—a little scared, you said there was possibly a basilisk down here, right?"

"Yes. I am not sure how much I will be able to control it. Considering..."

They both stepped into the bathroom, where Tom cancelled the spell. He could see Harry now, a little pale, but smiling all the same. Tom himself was nervous, for everything that could possibly go wrong. But he wouldn't go back. No, now was the time to—

"S-Should we say something? In parseltongue?" Harry asked, after Tom was quietly looking at the taps.

"*Open*" Tom hissed, stepping back. Immediately, the sinks in front of them started to move, disappearing into the floor. Leaving behind a gaping hole, Tom and Harry stared at the darkness beneath. Assuming they would have to jump, Tom did not like the prospect of jumping into an unknown, and with so many variables, he decided to speak again.

"*Stairs?*"

Then, a set of stairs emerged from the sides of the tunnel, descending down. Well, that was convenient.

At the same time, both of them lit their wands, and grabbing Harry's hand, Tom led the way forward.

His wand barely illuminated the steps in front of him. Even so, they went down deeper and deeper, until finally they could no longer see the bathroom above them.

“I wonder how deep this thing goes...” Harry openly wondered, exactly what Tom was thinking, which somewhat startled him.

Finally, after a slow progress downwards, they emerged into a cave-like area with the bones of mice and rodents littered across the floor. The only way forward was through a large, circular tunnel. It would seem Tom’s presumption was correct. They were going to have to deal with a very large snake.

Tom’s heart was beating madly in his chest. He still, somehow, couldn’t believe that the Chamber of Secrets was close ahead. He would finally be able to prove his inheritance, the only one capable of opening—besides his little anomaly, that is—and no one would be able to question his authority. No one would dare call him mudblood after this.

When they reached the end of the tunnel, there was a circular door with snakes engraved into the stone. Without missing a beat, Tom hissed again, and the door slowly moved open.

“Harry. If I tell you to close your eyes, do it, and don’t open them until I say so.”

“But what about—”

“I’ll be fine. I won’t go in until you promise me.”

Harry huffed out a sigh, then said, “Alright. I promise.”

“Good.” Then, Tom slowly moved forward, and led the way inside.

---

It was pure darkness, but the water gave off an eerie light, and the serpent statues situated down the aisle also glowed an illuminating green, lighting the way forward.

“Tom, this is amazing.” Harry stood awed at the sheer size of the cavern. How could something like this fit under the castle? Up ahead, there was a gigantic statue of Salazar Slytherin set into the wall. The water around the area was shallow, but hauntingly cool against Harry’s feet. They made their way forward, looking for any signs of movement, but it seemed like they were truly alone.

Tom moved forward, looking up at the statue with an unusual expression. Harry couldn’t really describe it. It was as if he was looking at magic for the very first time.

“Tom? Is that—” Harry was unsure if he was hearing things, but he thought he heard something strange, when both Harry and Tom were being perfectly still.

Tom looked back at Harry, but his smile of excitement soon morphed into confusion, then fear, as he had also heard the strange movement.

Tom hurried back towards Harry, but then, Harry noticed the mouth on the statue was slowly opening, and from the mouth came something so unearthly, so huge in its—

“Close your eyes!” Tom shouted.

Harry slammed his eyes shut, he had no idea what was happening, but his body was shaking. He felt Tom step ahead of him and hiss.

*“I command you as the Heir of Slytherin, stop, do not harm—”*

*“Ah, ssspeaker... an heir...yes...I can smell...the other one? No...”*

*“Stop, you will not harm him—”*

*“Heir of Slytherin...yesss...obey ...”*

“T-Tom what’s happening?” Harry interrupted, the natural waves of parseltongue coming to him at the sound of Tom and the Basilisk’s hissing.

*“Another ssspeaker? How... ssstrange...”*

*“I am your Master. You will not harm him, nor will you act without my consent. Now shield your eyes, so we may see your magnificence.”*

*“Massster...obey...”*

After a few moments of silence, Tom told Harry he could now open his eyes. Harry hesitantly opened them, and what a sight to behold! The Basilisk of the Chamber was terrifying in size, surrounding them on all angles with its huge body mass. But the serpent was also majestic and dignified in a way Harry had never seen a creature before. A thin layer of skin was protecting the deadliness of its gaze, and Tom was simply staring up in awe at being able to control such a beautiful being. Harry was will somewhat hesitant to gaze too directly into its eyes, even with the protection.

“Did Slytherin leave anything else behind?” Tom questioned, a note of urgency in his tone, “Do you have a name?”

*“No name...Massster... left a room...inside of wall...”*

Harry was just about to move when Tom grabbed his arm, stopping him in place.

“I think we should head back now...the other room will require more time to explore, and its already getting late.”

“Alright. It’s up to you, after all...”

So they left the Basilisk, saying a small goodbye, and that they would come back later to explore. The Basilisk didn’t seem too bothered by their words and moved back up into the statue to rest.

They left the same way they came in, up the stairs, then Tom disillusioned them again and they walked quietly back to the common room.

Both of them lost in thought.

#### Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry for leaving this story for a while :( I still want to write it, just I was a little lost as to where I wanted it to go... I was confused about some things, and I was trying to figure it out for so long lol...so I wrote this chapter twice, but in the first version, it was completely different, and I wasn't sure I wanted the story to go in that direction, so I changed it a bit around lol, I hope someone enjoys the update, I hope to write some more to this story again :) I hope I didn't forget anything in the story so far lol

# Chapter 27

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The night after opening the Chamber, Tom found himself surrounded by his Knights, and feeling an immense amount of smugness at the looks he was receiving. Avery and Dolohov were looking at him in pure, unbridled awe, while Lestrangle was nervously shifting in his seat, too afraid of looking Tom directly in the eyes. Mulciber was also a tad nervous, and Abraxas was waiting on his very word to start the meeting. It was truly a wonderful feeling, the satisfaction of being so very... *above* the purebloods who had looked down on him and Harry in their first year, and who were now looking at him with undisguised reverence and respect as the true heir of Slytherin.

Now all he needed was to eliminate his filthy muggle father, and no one need know Tom was only a half blood. It didn't disgust him, only being a half blood, and the others surely knew of it too, with his last name, but Tom was ready to get rid of any weaknesses in his past and move forward. He had a name he was thinking of using with his Knights. He personally wanted Harry's opinion on the name, but the boy was, sadly, no longer a part of his Knights.

Tom was waiting for the room to grow distinctly uncomfortable before he began. It wouldn't do to have his followers lax in the wake of such a powerful reunion following his opening of the Chamber. The first of many meetings where Tom would have the full authority of his group, what was said, discussed, and opinionated within the night.

Once Avery and Dolohov cooled their expressions, Tom began the group meeting with a small word.

"Last night, as you are all now aware, I opened the Chamber and took control of the monster. It is only a matter of time before Slytherin's legacy resumes. And I don't merely mean eliminating the mudbloods—" Tom took note of the disappointed faces around him. He smiled, "Rather by continuing Slytherin's legacy to uphold a future where pureblood traditions are not seen as fragmented pieces of the past, and where dark magic can freely reign."

Tom waited until his words sunk in, before continuing in a softer tone,

"That being said, we need more people who would be willing to support us when that time comes. Abraxas."

"Yes, my Lord?" the blonde spoke up after being addressed.

"You will be in charge of recruiting possible candidates for those supporters. Use discretion. It would not do to have Dumbledore breathing down our necks, as it is already."

Abraxas smiled but nodded curtly.

“As for the rest of you...”

Tom laid out some basic plans to move forward with his Knights. After an hour, the meeting was closed, but Tom called on Orion to stay behind afterwards. The Black heir slumped a little in his chair at the request but nodded all the same.

Once everyone was gone except the two of them, Tom tilted his head.

“You don’t look so happy lately. Tell me, Black, what ails you?”

Orion was clearly visibly unsure of how to address Tom, but ultimately settled on the *right* name when he said, “My L-Lord, it is nothing to concern you with...”

“Tell. Me.” Tom hissed in mild anger, calling on their vow to force Orion to speak. The Black heir bit his lip until it bled, but ultimately spoke when it became too much to bear and the threat of losing his magic.

“It’s about Harry—I think I found—a relative—it must be...b-but I’m afraid that Grindelwald is t-targeting them for... something...and I’m afraid Harry will get caught up in it. My father is in close contact w-with the Dark Lord and—”

Tom was on his feet in seconds. Black had found a relative of Harry’s? Who was it? And Grindelwald was targeting them?

Pushing on the vow, Black was pale and woozy in his seat, but continued talking, rushing to the point of incoherence.

“It’s Fleamont Potter! He’s older, but he looks just like Harry, I swear! E-Except the eyes...and Grindelwald is targeting the Potters. I don’t know why. D-Don’t tell Harry...he doesn’t need to be... caught up in it...”

Black’s head hit the table with a loud thud, but Tom hardly noticed the other boy passed out.

Peters. The last name Tom had always known was false, and the name Harry couldn’t remember. Potter...Tom needed confirmation before anything, if Fleamont Potter really did look like his Harry. Perhaps Tom could even find Harry’s despicable muggle relatives, the ones Harry had evidently cried over in his early days at Wool’s. If the Potter’s really were Harry’s relatives, Tom wanted to know why Harry was left with abusive muggles as a child, or if they were even his aunt and uncle as Harry had claimed. The Potter’s were well known purebloods in the Light magical community. They were also very wealthy, from what Tom knew. Perhaps Harry was only distantly related. Perhaps he was the child of an affair. Harry was probably a half-blood, then. Like *him*.

And Tom knew that Harry would want to meet with his family, if the boy knew of this. Perhaps Harry would even find out Tom had lied about where he came from. His age-old fear of Harry leaving him to live with his real family presented itself once again, and Tom cursed his own weaknesses when it came to the boy he had summoned so very long ago.



But still. Harry was *his*. Tom had laid claim to him the moment fate had chosen him to be Tom's companion. Harry would never go back to his old family. Not if Tom had any say in it.

Sending a mildly painful stinging hex at Black, the Black heir jumped up in his seat, while Tom left the room, heading back to the common room.

And if Grindelwald *ever* touched Harry...well, the man wouldn't be alive for very long...

---

The days passed quickly after that. Tom knew he needed to create a horcrux for himself, but when, and where, were questions he had yet to answer. All Tom knew was that once it was done, his assurance that he would survive against death would be set. He could do anything once he was immortal. Tom would never have to fear death again.

And *Harry*.

Harry had been occupying Tom's thoughts lately, so much so that Tom started to wonder if he was ill. It certainly wasn't normal to have so many thoughts about a single boy.

Fleamont Potter also looked *remarkably* like Harry... if school portraits were to be believed. Tom had no doubt they were somehow related after seeing the photograph.

But no. Tom's thoughts could never stay focused for very long whenever Harry was nearby. It was like a disease. Every time Harry was near, Tom would start to think irrational thoughts that made little sense. Like the way Harry's hair refused to stay in place, or the fact that Tom liked it as such. Or the way Harry responded to questions with a slight smile on his lips, as though he were thinking about something funny. But about what? Was he thinking about Tom nearly as much as Tom was thinking of him?

And his eyes. So brilliantly green, much like Tom's favorite curse. Tom had read about such fantasies, of course, but to this extent? How could one boy occupy all of Tom's coherence and sanity? Was it their soul bond? How they were connected, perhaps? It seemed more than that, however....

And Tom needed to focus, too. As the lasting days of their fourth year came to an abrupt end, Tom was not looking forward to heading back to Wool's. He had plans for this summer, however, and while he considered asking one of his followers to stay at their home, he thought better of it. Harry would need to stay as well, and besides, he did not feel like owing anyone anything, no matter their generosity.

"Tom. *Tom!*" Harry nearly shouted, Tom's attention immediately snapping to the only other boy seated in the compartment. Tom had wanted privacy on the train, and Harry was the only one Tom would allow to accompany him. Black had left the compartment with a hasty excuse when he saw Tom's glare.

"What are we going to do this summer? I don't want to be trapped in Wool's all day again. It's stifling."

“Hm.” Tom agreed, thinking of what to do. He looked out the window, contemplating how to arrange a better summer than their previous ones. They could always go to Diagon Alley. But that wouldn’t last the entire summer. They needed some place to stay. They were almost of age, Harry was turning 15 by the end of July, and while it was still a couple of years away, they could always find someplace to live sooner. It was a viable plan, the only problem was, as usual, money. Tom had saved up some galleons over the years, but not nearly enough to live by.

“I think we should try to find somewhere to work this summer. Perhaps in Diagon Alley. That way we can save our money, so we don’t need to rely on Wool’s any longer.” And if Tom was angry inside at the mere idea of relying on anything muggle, he didn’t show it.

Harry’s eyes brightened at the idea. Not that Tom was looking, of course. He *wasn’t*.

“That’s a great idea Tom!” Harry said, excited, “I wonder where we could work? But do you think they’d even allow us to, being our age?”

“I’m sure they won’t mind, and besides, we can always lie and say we’re turning of age, if anyone asks.”

“Where do you think we should try in Diagon?” Harry was clearly curious about the idea.

“Well, we could try a few bookshops, or perhaps the Apothecary? Personally, I was thinking of Borgin and Burkes in Knockturn Alley.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. Tom equally raised his own.

“Well, just be careful” Harry relented at last, looking away, “Merlin knows it’s not the greatest area to work in.”

“It’s just an idea. Don’t worry. We can try various different shops to see what they offer in terms of pay.”

“Yeah. I’m looking forward to the summer already!”

And while Tom smiled at Harry’s naivety and cheerfulness, there was a dark undertone to his thoughts.

*I have to do it.*

His older self had practically demanded it. Tom had not had any dreams since, and he still did not understand the importance of performing the ritual on Harry... but if it kept Harry safe from Dumbledore, and kept him tied to *Tom*, what more could he ask for?

Tom had to split his soul for the horcrux to succeed. And while Tom was perfectly fine severing his own mortality, to do the same to Harry was different, somehow.

Something inside of him seemed to break at the thought.

## Chapter End Notes

here's another chapter lol, hope you enjoy :)

Extra note: just reading some comments, I just don't think Harry's going to be killing anyone in this fic, even though I wrote that Tom is planning on splitting Harry's soul, maybe I didn't write it clear enough, but I think that what will happen will be different from that. Harry is too innocent for that type of thing lol

## Chapter 28

### Chapter Notes

oh my, I'm sorry for abandoning this story for a while, I was just a little upset, but I want to write for it again, because I realized how much I miss writing it. Hope the chapter is okay, thank you for reading, I'll try my best to finish the story :) Also, I hope I didn't forget anything when I wrote this lol It's been a while :)

At the beginning of fourth year, when shopping for school supplies, Tom had seen a necklace—a *locket*—on sale in Knockturn Alley. The price was absurd, but what really caught his eye was the selling point: apparently the locket had once belonged to Salazar Slytherin. Tom was no expert, but he *had* seen a portrait of the man wearing a very similar locket once in the school library. And ever since that day, Tom had desperately wanted to work there to find out how he could acquire the locket. Steal, or bribe. Whatever it took. It was his birthright. No one else should have it.

So, when Harry and Tom stepped into Diagon Alley only a week after summer started, Tom had made it a point to visit the shop to see if the locket was still there.

*It was.* Gleaming in the dark and dusty storefront.

Tom did not know if he would be able to work here, but he *was* almost sixteen, and Tom also knew he could pass for older. He was tall for his age, and knew he had the right amount of charisma to lie if needed.

Harry, meanwhile, had gotten lucky on their way into Diagon. He had gotten a small, part-time job at the Leaky Cauldron simply by asking the man named Tom (oh, how Tom *hated* his name). While the pay was mediocre, it was still better than nothing. So while Harry was settling into his new part-time work, Tom had gone to Knockturn Alley alone.

The screeching hags and shaded alleys did not scare Tom; he had long ago grown accustomed to these parts of the magical world. Still, Tom had stopped just in front of Borgin and Burkes and was somewhat hesitant to go in.

Tsk.

It wasn't like he was in first year. He knew what was stopping him. His *blood*. These parts of Knockturn were well acquainted with pureblood families, and typically catered to them alone. If Tom lied about his name, he was certain the shop would be able to tell. Yet if he was truthful about his name, he would probably be kicked out of the store and told never to come back. Even half bloods weren't treated very warmly in Knockturn.

It was worth a try, however, much to Tom's distaste.

He opened the door and stepped inside.

---

Harry wasn't a fool, though he did admit to his own naivety at times. When Tom had said he was going to work in Knockturn Alley, the thought didn't sit well with him. He knew Tom was up to something, but what, he had yet to find out. While Harry had managed to get a part-time job in the Leaky Cauldron by luck, Tom had insisted to try his hand at the shop in Knockturn.

"Hey boy" Tom the barkeeper yelled from the back, "You can go get yourself lunch, if you want. Take a break. Come back in an hour."

Harry didn't need to be told twice to take a break. He had been working without magic (he *was* still underage) since the morning, and besides that, he wanted to check in on Tom.

"Thank you, I'll be back soon." Harry told him while making his way into Diagon. While Harry didn't know where, exactly, Borgin and Burkes was, he did know the general way into Knockturn Alley. He hesitated for only a second before turning into the small, dark alleyway behind the general stores of Diagon. He twisted his hands into his pockets, lest he betray his nervousness.

Now, he only had to find Tom. If such a thing was ever easy.

---

Tom didn't mean to cast the *Imperio*, but, well, the old man wasn't doing him any favors and Tom really did need a job. Being close to the wizarding world, it was easy to use magic even if he was technically underage. No one would know. The trace, however inconvenient, could only do so much.

The man, evidently named Borgin, had tried to fight back, but at the risk of destroying his shop, Tom had gotten the better of him. Tom didn't want to leave too many trails, so for now, he would simply settle on getting the job. The locket could wait.

"Now, you will hire me, Tom Riddle, to work part-time in your store. You despise me but can see the benefits of hiring me. You will pay me your regular salary."

With that, Tom slipped out of the man's mind, and he grumbled something incoherent, but ultimately did what Tom asked.

"I expect you to come in and work the shop on weekdays in the morning. Burkes is away, so I'll do most of the handling. If there's a sale, you report it straight to me and log it in the books. We occasionally have clients who wish to sell their artifacts. If this is the case, you come straight to me until you can prove yourself. Is that clear, boy?"

"Certainly." Tom hid a smile as the man sneered at him.

"Good. You can start tomorrow. Now get out of my shop!"

Tom smiled at the rudeness. He had specifically told the man to despise him, otherwise, it might garner questions if the man was too pleasant with him. Besides, Borgin had the looks of a man who hated everyone. It was only in character.

Tom cast a sideways glance at the locket on display as he headed outside. It was perfect in every way. Maybe it was fate, to work here. The locket could be the perfect vessel for his soul....

---

To say Harry was lost was a massive understatement. He was sure, in the beginning, he was heading in the right direction—after all, there only was one direction to go down... but at the fork in the road, he must have missed something important, because now he couldn't even find the direction *back*.

He wasn't sure what the time was, but it felt like hours, and he was getting desperate. Desperate enough to even ask the lingering hags and odd wizards strolling around for directions. Which was bad. *Very* bad. He didn't want to look lost, let alone *admit* it to some stranger.

He could ask for directions to Borgin and Burkes, but then, Harry wasn't even sure if Tom was there right now, or if he had found a different job. And he didn't want to stop walking. To stop walking was to admit he didn't know where he was going. Not to mention the looks he was receiving, and the odd, paranoid sensation that he was being followed.

*Don't look, don't look, keep your wand in your pocket...*

When Harry turned the corner, he was sure he was being followed by someone, or something...he could see the shadows edging closer along the buildings. He hastened his steps, only to find he had turned down a path with no escape.

Then something made to grab him, he jerked out of reach, turning his wand—

A tall, hooded figure stood before him, with skeletal, peeling hands, reaching out through the alleyway—

Suddenly, Harry couldn't breathe. He could hear a woman screaming and screaming. He collapsed to the ground, his wand fumbling for a spell—anything at all—the Dementor before him reaching out to suck his soul—

*Please, not Harry! Not Harry! Take me instead!*

“Riddikulus!” Someone shouted above him, and with a crack of lightning, the boggart rolled away and down the street, hiding once again in the dark recesses of Knockturn Alley.

Harry looked up and found Tom's eyes. He didn't know what to say. But then, Harry had really thought there was a Dementor down here, but now that he thought about it, it was highly unlikely. He hadn't immediately connected the dots that it was just a boggart. He felt foolish.

“Sorry—”

“Don’t.” Tom said, and Harry winced at the tone, “It’s enough that you were looking around Knockturn for me, alone, never mind running into a boggart. And since when have you ever encountered a Dementor?” Tom pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration.

“I didn’t ask for my boggart to be a Dementor, you know.” Harry bit out, equally frustrated. He struggled to stand up, his arms still shaking from the encounter.

“It was strange, though. I heard a woman...she was calling my name...screaming...I-I think it was my mother...”

Tom had a funny look in his eyes at the mention of Harry’s mother, but in a second it was gone, so fast Harry was sure he had imagined it.

“That would be the effects of a Dementor. It brings out a person’s worst memories. I assume you cannot recall the memories in question?”

“No...” Harry felt tears in his eyes at the fact he couldn’t remember such an important moment. At hearing his mother screaming to protect him. From what, though? What was she trying to save him from, so much so that the Dementor would mark it as one of Harry’s worst memories, something he couldn’t even remember?

Harry was thankful to have found Tom at last, even if he *had* run into a boggart along the way. In an effort to change the sudden mood, he asked if he had gotten a place to work for the summer.

“Yes, I got part-time hours at Borgin and Burkes. I start tomorrow, working in the mornings.”

“That’s great news! I suppose we’ll not be seeing much of Wool’s if we can help it.” Although Harry didn’t mind spending his days with Tom in the orphanage, it was truly a suffocating place when you were surrounded by muggles all summer, who knew nothing of the magical world. It made for lonely interactions with the other orphans. Sometimes, he wondered what on earth Tom would have done if Harry had not been dropped off by his aunt and uncle all those years ago. Would he still be the same, or different somehow; colder?

Sometimes, Harry didn’t even want to imagine.

---

Later that night, Tom had another dream, only this time, their interaction was more demanding.

“If I am seeing things correctly, you still have not done as I have asked, have you?”

Tom grit his teeth against the sharp *crucio* sent his way. Even if he was only present in a dream, the man still had magic that could affect Tom while he was here. He didn’t know how, and while it was likely less painful than being physically present, the curse still hurt enough for Tom to bite his lips to prevent himself from screaming.

His future self looked more and more like Tom every time they met. He no longer looked like the monstrous snake thing with red eyes, which was a relief, although Tom did notice his older self's eyes were still red.

"I am working on it. I'll do it this summer. It's more complicated than I expected..." Tom said once the curse was lifted.

"Complicated because you aren't as willing now that you know what it will do?"

"No—"

"Do not *lie* to me," The man hissed, his eyes narrowed. Tom was still breathing heavily from the curse. He couldn't imagine himself being this insufferable. He had to change that. Slowly, he got to his feet.

"I can feel your hatred from over here." His older self remarked, lounging in the chair with a small smirk. Tom thought he looked rather pleased with the assumption. Tom had no comment, so he glared at the floor instead.

"Do not be such a child. I am not asking again. If the next time we meet you have still not completed the ritual, I have other, far less pleasant means to get what I want."

Tom didn't like the sound of it.

"Like?" He bit out, anger taking hold over his usual composure. If his older self held any irritation at Tom's tone, the man didn't show it. Instead, he stood up and walked over to where Tom was standing. Tom held his ground, refusing to be intimidated.

"Like using the *Imperio* to take over your mind. I'm sure you wouldn't like it...and neither, I imagine, would Harry. Or I could also—"

Tom was startled when the man started to walk behind him, before he fell on his knees, his lips splitting open from another *crucio*, this one much more painful than the last.

"I could also curse you to an inch of your life." The man whispered while Tom was struggling under the curse. "As long as your mind is still intact, there are many ways to get what I want..."

When he stopped the curse, Tom was curled on his side, breathing hard, his fingers clawed into the carpet.

"Lastly..." He knelt down, and Tom tried to pull away, "I could also take Harry away for myself, before Dumbledore, or even you have any say in it."

Fingers curled into Tom's hair, before he was pushed up to meet the red eyes of his future self. A snarl was on Tom's face even before the threat. The man merely smiled in response.

"Of all the ways I could do it, child, I know which one you fear the most. But do not worry—" He let go of his hair, and Tom fell back to the floor with a grunt.



“I won’t be doing anything soon. Think about what I’ve said. And where your loyalty truly lies.”

When the dream ended, Tom was lying in his bed at Wool’s, his breathing staggered, and his lips bleeding on the pillow. He was shaking. Harry was, miraculously, still asleep. Thankfully, it appeared he hadn’t screamed out loud.

When his breathing evened out, and he was no longer shaking from the curse in the dream, he thought back to everything his older self had said. He couldn’t believe they were the same person. When had things gone so...*wrong*?

Tom hated being manipulated, but he couldn’t deny it any longer. The man was openly using Harry to get Tom to do whatever he asked. The unveiled threat of taking Harry away had Tom seething.

He thought back to the last thing his older self had said.

The answer was obvious, or so it seemed. His loyalty had always been to himself. That was, essentially, what his future self wanted him to believe too. To *trust* that his older counterpart had only Tom’s best interests at heart.

Unconsciously, Tom looked over at Harry sleeping.

The boy was curled on his side, under the thin blankets of the orphanage. His hair was a mess all over the pillow—no wonder Tom had such a hard time straightening it out—and he seemed to be unconsciously clenching his fists, in a dream world of his own.

His eyes trailed over Harry features, to the lightning shaped scar on his forehead. As Tom closed his eyes against a sudden draft, he felt at a loss of what to do. Do the ritual and incur Harry’s wrath—because he knew Harry would absolutely *not* want him to do it, no matter how his older self claimed it was for the boy’s protection. Or not do the ritual and suffer by his *own* hand.

*Where your loyalty truly lies....*

His loyalty should be to himself, but even then, Tom knew the words were wrong. A lie.

His loyalty, he knew, even long before this moment, had always been to someone else entirely....

## Chapter 29

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As time passed, and summer was well and truly underway, Harry felt he was missing something vital in the way Tom was acting. After working in their respective jobs for little over a month now, Harry could honestly say that he preferred the less busy days, while Tom, for his part, claimed that the store was almost always perpetually empty (how lucky), with the occasional customer looking to sell rather than buy. But Tom was acting different than usual, and on more than one occasion Harry had caught him staring with a strange look on his face. But that wasn't what was bothering Harry, at least, not right now.

It was the cryptic note he had found on Tom's bed, having worked an odd shift at the Leaky, and upon arriving back at Wool's, he had found the note on the top of Tom's bed.

*I'll be back in the morning. Do not look for me.*

*Tom*

Harry's heart raced, a thousand thoughts running through his mind.

*What kind of trouble have you gotten yourself into now?*

*How can you say that, and expect me to sit still and wait?*

He scrunched the note in his hand, his mind already going through the possible locations of where Tom could be. It must be something personal, Harry deduced, otherwise he wouldn't have minded him coming along. But what? Where would he go? What was so important that he had to leave Harry a note not to chase after him?

Along with the note, Tom's odd behavior and quietness over the last weeks left Harry feeling unsettled. He didn't want to admit it, but Tom was likely doing something terrible right now. He had to find him, stop him, because whatever it was, Harry did not want to see Tom end up in Azkaban.

It was when Harry was pacing around the room, trying to think of where Tom could have gone, that he remembered something. Quickly, Harry crawled under Tom's bed—*sorry Tom*—and pulled out his trunk. It was locked, predictably, but Harry knew something Tom didn't think he knew. Tom thought he was being clever, using a name he rarely used, but Tom had clearly underestimated Harry's relationship with Mrs. Cole. The matron had told him the story of Tom's mother, and her dying words, one evening when she was drunk. His middle name had been so unusual—Marvolo—that it had stuck in Mrs. Cole's mind many years later. Tom didn't know that Harry knew this, nor did he know that Harry knew it was the password to his trunk.

"Marvolo" Harry hissed, and the trunk popped open.

Carefully, so as not to disturb the neatly packed items, he looked for Tom's journal. It was hidden beneath his books, and when Harry pulled it out, he quickly flipped through it. He mentally said sorry to Tom, again, for going through his things.

But if there was any indication of where Tom could be, it would be written in here.

There was a lot of magical notes, spells Tom was pursuing learning, and his thoughts. Harry skipped over these and read one of the last small notes, written, if the date was anything to go by, on the very last day of school.

*Little Hangleton, near Great Hangleton. Morfin Gaunt.*

*Gaunt.* The name was only somewhat familiar to Harry. Tom had told him once, with an edge in his voice, of how he was related to the Gaunt family, who was, in turn, related to Salazar Slytherin. It wasn't much to go by, he didn't even know where this Morfin Gaunt would *be* in Little Hangleton. But it was better than nothing.

Grabbing his coat, Harry ran out of Wool's with little to go on, his wand tucked into his pocket just in case. It was nearly dusk now, and night would fall soon enough. Since Harry couldn't apparate, he decided to do something he had only ever heard of.

He stood near an alleyway, and once nobody was looking or walking past, he pulled his wand out.

The Knight bus came roaring up the sideroad, bright purple, and stopped in front of him. The doors opened, and hesitantly, Harry boarded the bus. He paid the fare and took a seat on a bed, of all things.

"Where to, lad?" the driver asked. Thankfully, the bus was empty except for him. No unnecessary stops, then.

By the time they arrived on the outskirts of the small town in but a few minutes, Harry was visibly sick. He clutched his stomach and vowed he would never ride the bus again if he could help it.

With a wave to the driver, the bus roared out of the town in a flash, and Harry was left alone.

Now he only had to find Gaunt. Hopefully, Tom would be there. Maybe his gut instinct was wrong, he dearly hoped it was... but Harry had a terrible feeling inside.

---

Since the dream, Tom had been restless, anxious to do *something*, but what, he didn't know. Completing the ritual, doing as his older self threatened, seemed almost absurd now. Tom would *not* let himself be manipulated that easily.

And so, when the opportunity presented itself for Tom to finally get rid of something *else* he was anxious about, he took it. He knew it was instinctual, Tom's desire to eliminate

his family. He knew it was almost a pull of destiny, the hands of fate so strong it was nearly impossible to fight.

The town was quiet in the evening, as Tom wandered through the village. He saw the poor side of town, small little houses crunched closely together, and then the rich overlooking the village, with a particularly large manor on the hillside. The Riddle house.

Tom had left a note for Harry not to come, but he knew it was likely the boy might follow him anyway. He didn't know how; it was simply a feeling. Perhaps, this was why he was still wandering around the village, even though he knew Morfin Gaunt lived in a shabby hut in a small grove nearby.

Tom wanted to interrogate Morfin first, to view his memories, perhaps, and then decide what to do with him. From his research, Tom had found the major reason for the fall of the Gaunt family: inbreeding. The Gaunt's had wanted to preserve their line, the line of Salazar Slytherin, so much so that, eventually, they fell into madness. Tom sneered at the implications. It wouldn't do for anyone to know that Tom was descended from madness.

Eventually, his stroll came to a jarring end when he found himself unconsciously walking towards the grove where his uncle lived. There was a dead snake nailed to the door, and the entire shack looked like it was sinking into the ground.

*This, he thought, is where the noble house of Salazar Slytherin eventually ended up.*

Tom did not even knock on the door, he simply pushed it aside. And there, sitting on a worn-down couch, was his uncle. Ugly didn't even begin to describe him. His clothes were torn and dirty, his hair matted and unkept, but the look on his face fell from shock at the door opening, to a sneer that twisted his face into something hideous.

*"You!"* Morfin hissed, struggling to stand, *"Get out! Filthy muggle, I told her to stay away from you!"*

Tom didn't even need to look into the man's mind to know he was talking about the past. Tom knew he must look enough like his father to promote the kind of rhetoric his uncle was sprouting. Did he not recognize that Tom couldn't possibly be a muggle? Perhaps the man had simply gone insane.

Meanwhile, Tom was standing in the doorway, taking in the house that his mother had evidently grown-up in. There were dirty dishes everywhere, a small kitchen and table, and a single bedroom in the back. Where was the wealth this family had once held? He noticed a gold ring with a black stone on the man's finger. Possibly the last of the heirlooms his family *hadn't* sold.

Morfin had taken out his wand, but Tom was faster, and bound the man to his chair. Then, as though seeing him for the first time, his uncle finally recognized him for what he was.

*"Filthy half breed! You're her son, aren't you? I can see the muggle's face in you!"*

*“Oh?” Tom replied sharply, “Tell me, dear uncle...do I look enough like my father that the muggles will recognize me?”*

*“You dare speak to me in the noble language? Filthy half-blood, with your filthy muggle father! I told her to stop seeing him, but did she listen? No, and then she brewed that love potion and ran off with the muggle! She stole our precious heirlooms! Well, the dirty muggle came back here not long afterwards, and—”*

Tom didn't need to hear the rest. With a loud shout from Morfin, Tom tore through his uncle's mind and saw bits and pieces of his mother's past. The potion. The fights. His lovesick, hideous mother, trying to win the affection of a handsome and rich muggle. Tom hadn't known about the potion before this very moment, and he immediately understood the implications.

Pulling out of the man's mind, Morfin slumped in his bonds, while Tom thought of what to do. He didn't realize he was breathing heavily until he willed himself to calm down.

Taking the man's wand, which had fallen to the floor, Tom reworked the bonds so the man couldn't escape anytime soon. Then, he left. One look around the dilapidated shack and Tom knew there was nothing particularly valuable. Oh, but maybe....

He summoned the ring on his uncle's finger, and carefully took it into his hands. There was a strange symbol on the face of it, but otherwise, it looked deceptively normal. Tucking the ring into his pocket, Tom exited the tiny shack and made his way up the hill.

Night had truly started to come by now. It was a long trek up the hill, but it was time. Time to pay his *father* a visit.

---

As Harry ran through the town, not knowing where he was going, he bumped into a lot of muggles walking here or there in the late evening. Harry didn't know where to begin. There were a lot of tiny houses, and then the rich houses above the town. Harry wished he had more of a plan, but he had so little information to go on. He wasn't even sure if this was where Tom *was*, after all.

He ran into a large graveyard at the back of a church, with a large manor overlooking the town from the top of a hill. The graveyard made him pause. But only for a second.

“Excuse me!” Harry asked a random muggle who was walking by, carrying a large bag. He looked over, surprised, then hesitant.

“Yes?”

“Um,” Harry was unsure of whether to trust a stranger with his questions, but he had no leads, and time was running out.

“Do you know where Morfin Gaunt liv—”

The muggle's eyes hardened, and he looked down at Harry in disgust.

“Deep in the grove, over there” he pointed down the road and into a small forest, “I advise you not to, though. Everyone knows he’s barking mad, hissing at everything in sight.”

With another hard look at Harry, no doubt wondering if he too was strange enough to ask about the man, the muggle left quickly, leaving Harry to wonder at that. But there was no other options.

Hurrying into the wooded area where he had been directed, Harry soon discovered a small hut, disturbingly with a snake attached to the door.

Harry didn’t know if anyone was even home, or even if the door was locked, but he knocked urgently on the door, waiting for someone to answer.

“Hello?” Harry called in when no one responded.

Hesitantly, Harry opened the door, and was greeted to the sight of a large, dirty man bound to a couch near the door. When Harry stepped inside, he grunted, drained of effort from trying to undo the bonds.

*“What do you want, boy? Leave me alone!”* The man hissed in parseltongue. Harry was only momentarily surprised, but then, if this was one of Tom’s relatives, no wonder he could also speak to snakes.

*“I’m sorry for intruding, sir; I was wondering if—if you’ve seen—a boy named Tom recently—”* It sounded stupid even to Harry’s ears. Of course he had. The man was, after all, bound to his chair. It didn’t take a genius to figure out that Tom had likely already been through here.

The man, taken back by Harry’s speech, suddenly shouted, and started to pull at his bonds more furiously.

*“Another one? You filthy half-breed, and my filthy sister! Undo these bonds, boy, and I’ll set you straight right now!”*

Harry unconsciously stepped back into the door frame. No way was he undoing the bonds. He wasn’t used to seeing someone so...deranged and angry. But he steeled himself, asking the question anyway.

*“Where did he go? Where’s Tom?”*

*“I said undo the bonds boy! Worthless scum! He’s probably crawled back to his muggle family, to that muggle father of his! He’s probably up there right now, on the hillside manor, just like his mother, desperate to be accepted. Now undo the ropes, that half-breed stole my wand!”*

Harry stepped another step back, and when Morfin realized he wasn’t going to untie him, he roared in a frightening rage, and Harry took off in a sprint, the door slamming shut behind him.

The hillside manor? Once Harry got a good look at the hill, there really only was one mansion on top of it. With his heart hammering in his throat, Harry ran up the road, desperate to make it before anything terrible happened.

He knew, just knew, that Tom wasn't planning on a heartfelt reunion.

---

Tom knocked politely on the door. Unlike his uncle, this was a meeting doubtless to be savored.

When the door inched forward, a maid answered in a hesitant voice.

"Yes?"

Tom saw the moment her eyes widened, and a cruel smile made its way on his lips.

"I'm here to see Mr. Riddle, if you would be so kind. My father." He added when the maid didn't move. As if his words suddenly sparked a memory, the maid stepped aside and allowed him in, before rushing off to get her Master.

Tom stood there, admiring the muggle architecture and finery before loud voices could be heard in the dining area.

"I'll have none of it, Olivia! Let him into the reception hall! I'll have a word with him, at most." Came a gruff voice.

The maid came back, a look of fear in her eyes that Tom relished in before she led him further inside and into a large sitting area.

Tom sat down on the lavish couch without invitation, crossing his feet and twirling his uncle's wand in his hand.

A few minutes went by before numerous feet made their way into the hall, where the muggle's found Tom stretched leisurely on the couch. Tom raised his eyebrow at the elder pair of Riddles, most likely his paternal grandparents. Somehow, he hadn't expected them. Then his eyes slid over to a man in his late fifties, evidently Tom's father. A sardonic smile crept onto his face at the rigid, angry tones of his father aimed at him, the man's eyes lingering on Tom's wand for a second too long. So he knew what it was. Good.

"You're her son, aren't you, boy. You look—what's your name?" Tom Riddle Sr. asked, narrowing his eyes in outright disgust at Tom.

Tom's smile grew wider.

"Tom Riddle. She named me after you."

A gasp fell out from the elderly woman's mouth, while the elderly man, Tom Riddle Sr.'s father, face grew paler.

His father sneered down at Tom. In response, Tom merely twirled the wand lightly in his fingers, still smiling.

“You want money, don’t you.” His father said, like it was the most obvious thing in the world, then reached into his pocket to write a check. “Here. Take it and leave. Never come back.” He threw the check to the ground. Now it was Tom’s turn to sneer.

“I don’t want your money, *father*. What use is muggle money, anyway? No, I merely came to finally meet the man who abandoned his wife when she was pregnant, leaving his son to an orphanage to rot while you returned to your mansion and luxury. There really is no better reunion, is there?” Tom laughed harshly, and each one of the Riddle’s flinched at the sound.

Tom Riddle Sr. quickly found his anger again and shouted,

“Your mother was a freak! She—poisoned me, and I fell in love with a freak! When I finally returned to my senses, I abandoned her as was my right. She tricked me with—that freakishness of yours. You’re like her, aren’t you. I can tell. You’re a freak too.” He nodded toward the wand still in Tom’s hand.

Tom stilled at the word ‘freak’. It was all too common for muggles to label the magical as freaks. Many at the orphanage had called him that. And worse. Still, something lurched in his stomach as his supposed father called him a freak.

He stood up abruptly, his humor gone, causing all three Riddle’s to move an inch backwards. In their own home. Oh, he may be a ‘freak’ to them, but clearly, they were still afraid.

He pointed his uncle’s wand at them, the tip of the death curse on his lips, when the unexpected happened.

There was a knock on the door.

Tom’s hand stilled, as did the Riddle family at the knocking on the door. It was a strange knocking, though, almost frantic.

The maid, who had been watching from the doorway, stumbled over herself to get the door.

Tom listened, his heart thundering in his chest. He would have to kill more than just his family, it seemed. The maid, obviously. And then the new intruder, of course. He couldn’t be caught here by an unexpected guest. Tom planned on pinning the murders on his uncle. Hence, why he was using his uncle’s wand. But if this intruder ran and reported—

“Tom! Are you there?”

Tom’s mind went blank. He didn’t register the words, only the voice it belonged to.

*Harry.*



## Chapter End Notes

So here's another chapter, I hope it turned out okay...I wanted Tom to go after his family at some point during the summer, so here it is lol Thank you for the comments, I read every one even if I don't comment back, I'm just a little shy lol Hope someone enjoys, and also I hope I didn't forget anything in the story thus far. I sometimes feel I messed up the timeline in this story, but I'm hoping, with some more chapters to explain, that it will make maybe a little sense lol Thank you for reading :)

# Chapter 30

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*Harry.*

For a moment, Tom did nothing. He stared at the wall, uncomprehending to even the possibility that Harry was *here*. How had he found him? Tom had thought it was likely the boy would find him tonight, but never so soon. Never in the middle of the act.

When the senior Riddle tried to subtly move backwards, Tom snapped out of his daze.

Whatever the case, something had to be done *now*, before it was too late.

He snarled and threw an *Incarcerous* spell at the three Riddle's. They fell over in a heap, the bonds tight.

Tom hurried over to the door to make sure the maid didn't run. She was partly blocking the hallway, and as Tom cast the spell she fell over, revealing a startled Harry. Harry, meanwhile, was stunned at the sudden display, so Tom grabbed him as well and hurried him inside, slamming the door shut behind them.

He dragged Harry into the room, and then cast a silencing charm around the area so they wouldn't be heard by the Riddle's, who were watching them in anger and fear, shouting words Tom couldn't hear.

"Tom, what's happening?" Harry started, "What is... this...?" He pointed to the tied-up Riddle family.

Tom, meanwhile, was frantically searching for a way out. An explanation. Something Harry would believe, because as of now, the evidence around him was *damning*. He paced up and down, ignoring the bewildered looks from Harry.

If only he had been quicker. If only he hadn't wasted precious moments simply *talking* to his family. Of the hours he had spent just *wandering* around the village, thinking—all while Harry was coming to find him. He should have acted sooner. He should have done the deed as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Tom had been foolish. Very foolish indeed. He should have—!

Tom abruptly stopped pacing, stiffening when he felt Harry wrap his arms around him.

"Tom. It's okay." Harry whispered into his shoulder. Tom's heart was rapid against his chest, "I know what you were trying to do...you don't have to pretend. I *know*. We—We'll figure this out, okay?"

Tom went still at his words. Harry knew. He knew he was trying to kill his family. Maybe it was obvious. For the first time in a long time, Tom wasn't sure what to do. He had never felt more...*exposed* than he did now. The Riddle family was still struggling against their bonds, and Tom felt so utterly and completely lost. Compared to a few minutes ago, when he had been perfectly in control, now Tom's façade was crumbling to pieces right before Harry's eyes.

Tom wouldn't—couldn't—kill in front of the boy. But he had planned on killing the Riddle's today and crafting a horcrux out of the ring. He had planned for this very moment... only for it to come to a jarring halt.

It was as if Tom were at a crossroads, and this—killing his family, killing his father—was one further step in a long line towards his destiny. But Harry—listening to Harry, asking Tom to *stop*—was an option he had not even considered before the boy's arrival. It felt as though fate held him by a noose, urging him to continue on this path of destruction. For all the pain and anger at his family. For everything he had endured. And yet here Harry was, slowly loosening the ties, giving him a breath of fresh air and the...willingness to choose something different.

Tom let out a rattling sigh. He knew, from the very moment Harry had shouted his name, from the very moment Harry had stepped over the threshold of the Riddle manor in an effort to stop him, that the plan to kill his family was over.

It was finished.

If it left a sour taste in Tom's mouth, that the Riddle's would live, he ignored the feeling entirely.

He turned around, facing Harry, who let go and was watching him with careful eyes. The boy had his wand clutched tightly in his pocket.

Did he truly intend to fight Tom? Harry was a decent fighter, after all, Tom had seen him in class. He couldn't deny it. Tom was curious indeed about how that fight would go.

But not today. Not here.

When Harry opened his mouth for another argument, Tom pressed his finger to the boy's lips.

"Alright. I'll stop. I have no need for this family. Not anymore."

Harry looked stunned by the casualness in which Tom relented. He brushed a lock of Harry's hair behind his ear. Tom was struck by Harry's face turning a quiet shade of red. How cute.

Glancing over at the silent Riddle's, Tom felt only fury. But looking back at Harry, something calmed inside of him. If only briefly.

“We’ll obliviate them. I have...my uncle’s wand. We’ll have to stop for him as well... before we leave. The authorities will be here soon. We’re in a muggle home, after all. I didn’t mean—”

This time, it was Harry who shushed him.

“You don’t have to explain. I *know*. We’ll do this together, okay?”

Tom had no words.

---

Soon they obliviated everyone, including his uncle, and Tom and Harry quickly fled the scene just as the aurors were coming up the hill to investigate the home. While Harry had simply wanted to obliviate everyone of their presence, Tom knew it would not be that simple. He had, after all, stolen his uncle’s wand and used magic in a muggle home. To simply obliviate them would mean to leave traces of Tom and Harry, which Tom could not allow.

Instead, Tom left the Riddle home looking as though someone had broken in. He implanted false memories in both the Riddle family and his uncle, framing his uncle for the break in. With Morfin’s record, the man would likely be charged for using magic around muggles, and with his hatred for the Riddle family, no further motive would be needed. Since the family was still alive, the aurors would likely leave the house alone.

It would, for all appearances, be a simple case to close.

Tom led Harry back to Wool’s in silence, taking the muggle way back. Tom did not want to leave any more magical traces of their presence. It was nearing morning by the time they arrived. They climbed in through a second story window, and both fell into their respective beds, exhausted.

Harry was asleep soon after, and Tom watched him sleep for a time.

It was then, in these moments, that Tom decided something he had been harboring onto for quite a while now.

Taking out Morfin’s ring, the one he had stolen—the one he had, before this very moment, intended to become a Horcrux—Tom put it on his finger, still thinking.

He laughed lightly to himself.

He still intended to make a Horcrux. Of that, he was certain. But, perhaps, he need not hurry. Perhaps, even, he need not kill his family to do it. It was painfully clear, after tonight, that Tom would not do anything like *that* with Harry by his side. The boy was simply too distracting, to put it mildly. He was always so determined to keep Tom from straying to the wrong path. He was always so determined to get in Tom’s way.

Not that he minded. Before, Tom thought he might have. But now... Tom found himself entranced.

Tom had always known there was something strange about Harry. From the very first moment he landed on Tom's bed, he knew there was something...other, about the boy.

Something that was changing Tom. For better or worse, he didn't know.

Summoning a person through accidental magic was simply impossible. He knew this from his research over the years and asking various professors about the subject. While Tom himself may be exceptional at magic, he knew he could not, as a mere child, have summoned the boy through any traditional means. It was simply unheard of.

Then how had the boy appeared when Tom called?

Tom thought back to his revelation that their souls were somehow connected. He did not know how, but it made sense, in a way. It was why he could...*feel* Harry's presence beside him and around the castle. It was why, whenever he pressed his fingers against Harry's scar, a humming, burning need for *more* always coursed through him. Harry and Tom's souls were tied together, perhaps from the first moment Harry had appeared.

It did not make sense.

None of it made any sense.

Still, the boy was here. Somehow, Harry had come to Tom's call.

He did not know if it was fate, magic, or both.

Tom knew the threat of his future self was very real. He could, at any moment, take over Tom's mind if he did not do as the man had instructed. But Tom had never been one to take orders. If the man wanted to play that kind of a game, then Tom would gladly play.

Besides, the man was, *technically*, Tom. He must already know that *this* was his choice. Tom's decision.

No, Tom would not hurt Harry. He would not do as his older self had ordered. If that meant that he would have to occlude his own mind from *himself*, shut down his own dreams, then so be it.

Harry was *his*.

And Tom would not have it any other way.

---

The rest of the summer passed by uneventfully. Since the Riddle incident, Harry had been unusually calm and happy. Something between them relaxed, unspoken of, in the wake of the incident. It was as though they were seeing each other, truly, for the very first time. As though each of their masks—especially Tom's—had come off, and there was nothing left to hide. They never spoke about what happened, nor of what Tom had been planning to do. Yet it was as though they shared a secret between them, a secret trust that one would not betray the other.

They each worked their respective jobs in Diagon for the remainder of the summer. They pooled their collective money into a shared vault that would, hopefully one day, allow them to escape Wool's orphanage before they turned of-age. At least, that was the plan if Tom had any say in it.

Harry had, evidently, noticed Tom's new ring on his finger in the passing weeks. Tom had told him the truth of the stolen ring, likely the last of his family heirlooms. Harry had not minded, and was even relieved to hear the truth, given the boy had already met his lovely uncle and knew just how insane the man was.

Every night, Tom occluded his mind and dreams. He had not dreamt of his older self since, but that didn't mean Tom wasn't taking precautions. He would research dream magic more in the library once he was back at Hogwarts. Tom needed to know the boundaries of such magic, and whether the man could penetrate his mind when he least suspected it.

When September arrived, so did the other Slytherin's joyful tales of summer fun. Harry laughed at Orion's jokes when they met once more on the train. Tom had to refrain himself from dragging Harry to a private compartment and ignoring the Black heir until they were officially at school.

As it was, Tom had to endure. He sat with his fellow Knights, Harry, and Orion, although the Black heir *was* technically a part of Tom's Knights, Tom did not always feel this way.

He also found himself staring at Harry on the train. In the quiet times, when no one was looking. Often, he found Harry staring back, even when he was engaged in conversation with Orion. His boy would then smile at Tom, a mischievous little smile, before looking away again.

The image made Tom's heart squeeze.

---

The tables were packed after the first years were sorted. Headmaster Dippet came to the front to speak before dinner. Tom's lips thinned when he saw Dumbledore nearby, smiling jovially at the crowd. His eyes narrowed when he saw Tom (no surprise), and then his gaze drifted to the right. Tom realized with a start that the man was looking at Harry. A strange look, too; one Tom didn't like.

Dippet spoke about the usual rules, but there was one new thing as well. Something that caught Tom by surprise.

"This year, I would like to announce, we have decided to reinstate Hogwarts's Yuletide Ball." Whispers rang out, someone screamed in delight, before Dippet hushed them all once more.

"That said, we are allowing all students fifth year and up the opportunity to attend. Normally, we have not had this event in some years. However, our gracious potion's professor has wiggled some room with the board, and Hogwarts will now, officially, be hosting a dance during the winter holidays, and many more in the years to come.

“As I said previously, it will only be allowed for students fifth year and up. Students who wish to attend will need to sign up. If one wishes to bring a date, the student must, again, be fifth year and up.”

Groans came from the fourth-year tables across the hall. Evidently, Tom noted, some had been hoping to attend as a side-along for a date. Dippet quickly shut that possibility down.

After a few more words, the students were allowed to eat dinner. If the chatter was slightly louder than normal, Tom ignored it. Of course, now being in fifth year, Tom would be allowed to attend the ball. In fact, judging by the Slytherin’s excitement all around him, it would be social suicide *not* to go.

“I for one am eager to see what Hogwarts will offer. It’s been many years since a formal dance was allowed. My father told me before, of course.” Abraxas spoke to the group.

“Agreed,” Lestrangle said from beside Tom, “I can’t believe it took this long for Hogwarts to allow a Yule celebration. Well, better late than never, I suppose. Who do you think you’ll be taking?”

Abraxas’s eyes shifted partly to the side, and he coughed elegantly into his hand. Tom looked over and noticed some Slytherin girls were watching their group very carefully, all smiles.

Lestrangle barked out a laugh.

As their conversation continued, likely the same conversation all across the Great Hall, Tom shifted slightly to watch Harry and Orion talking quietly to each other. His finger’s tightened around his fork as he watched.

But then Harry noticed his stare, and Tom calmed down as they shared a secret look. Harry was nodding to whatever Orion was saying, while covertly glancing in Tom’s direction.

With that same little smile on his lips.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait, I was feeling a little badly and I was also trying to write my own stories for a while, which I enjoy too, and I don't have a lot of time to write lately. I hope I can get back into it. I don't plan on abandoning my stories, even if it's been a while. I'm just really slow. lol.

I hope someone enjoys the new chapter. So Tom didn't kill his family...I always wanted to take Tom in a more redeeming way, while Voldemort of the future is still pretty evil. I hope for Tom to basically be 'slightly redeemed' but not fully. He's still not morally

good, but maybe, because of Harry, he will become slightly more redeemed. Hopefully it all makes sense by the end.

Thank you for reading. I hope the chapter is okay :)



# Chapter 31

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The term started normally enough, if not for Dumbledore breathing down Tom's neck. Since the welcoming feast, Tom noticed Dumbledore was staring at him *more* lately, if such a thing was possible. The man had been bad in the past, but it was almost as though he was *waiting* for Tom to do something terrible this year. Not to mention the heavy gazes he sent Harry too, as if seeing the boy for the first time.

Tom didn't like it. It sent shivers down his spine. If he herded Harry from Dumbledore's class the moment it ended, even if it was obvious, Tom did not care.

The warnings of his older self kept repeating in his mind. Even if it was a tool to try and control him, Tom couldn't help but fear his future self had known something that Tom did not.

But it was no matter now.

Tom continued to occlude his mind at night, with the singular purpose to keep *himself* out, and the dreams had all but stopped. It was a success, except for Tom's *own* nagging mind that told him he was missing something important. Vital.

The dance, too, was on Tom's mind as classes officially got underway. It was, for the most part, a complete headache. The entire school, including the fifth year Slytherins, seemed to have forgotten that school life did not solely consist of incessant chatter about the upcoming yuletide ball, which wasn't even until December. By the third week of term, Tom had had enough.

During breakfast one Saturday morning, Tom found himself snapping at anyone who so much as *mentioned* the dance, implied or not, causing the entire area around him to swerve the conversation to more appropriate topics.

Abraxas, having arrived late, wondered if the dance was causing a mood all around the table. Tom had visibly shaken then and cast a not-so-discreet hex at the blonde boy, spelling his mouth shut for the rest of breakfast. Wisely, no one chose to comment on the boy's silence.

After that, Tom's headache became less pronounced as conversations surrounding the dance were kept hushed whenever he was near.

*Good, he thought. If I hear one more word—*

"Tom! I didn't know you were taking Myrtle Warren to the dance! When did you two become a thing?"

Harry, his sweet, *sweet* boy who simply did not know any better, came running up to him in the empty corridor. Tom turned around to fully face him. His previous rage at the mention of the ball completely vanished once he saw who it was. Besides, that bright, mischievous smile told Tom all he needed to know.

“I take it you are disappointed?” Tom teased, watching as Harry’s face turned a slight shade of red.

“No, I was just curious!” Tom relished in the fact that Harry was avoiding his gaze, “But I heard the rumour during lunch. Apparently Warren is telling anyone who will listen that you’re her date for the ball.”

“I see.” Tom said. To put it simply, he did not care what rumours Warren started. No one would believe her anyway. But to appease his boy, Tom smiled slyly and took a step closer to Harry, who jumped into a startled motion and bumped backwards into the stone wall.

“What are you—”

Tom followed him closely, leaning into the boy’s personal space. He was in a playful mood, and Tom was quite enjoying the way Harry’s face flushed an even deeper shade of red.

“If you are jealous, Harry, you only need to say so. I’ll cancel with Warren immediately.”

Harry, for his part, looked about to faint. Tom eased up a little, allowing Harry the chance to escape. The boy took it immediately. He ducked under Tom’s arm and bolted to the side with the reflexes of a Seeker.

“I—have to study.” Harry blurted out suddenly, much to Tom’s amusement, “I’m going to the library now. Bye!”

Tom watched him leave, amused despite himself.

---

The days passed quickly, and Harry noticed that the mood between him and Tom was changing. Because somehow, in the middle of it all, Harry had forgotten that Tom was his *friend* and not... not whatever *this* was. This... awkward, stammering, heart aching feeling whenever he looked at Tom too closely. Whenever they spent the evening together by the fire, reading or doing homework, sitting so closely that their legs bumped, or else Tom’s hands accidentally brushing against his own.

Ever since the dance was announced, it seemed as though everything had changed. No, that wasn’t quite right. It was *Harry* who was changing. And not overnight. No, Harry was sure *this* ...had been happening for quite some time now.

But as far as feelings went, Harry was also positive that Orion was changing too, although Harry wasn’t sure if it was for the better. Despite coming back to school in good

spirits, Orion's mood depressed to the point where even Harry could not garner a response from him at times. Orion seemed distant this term, but his friend wouldn't tell him anything.

The war had also taken a sharp turn for the worse. Grindelwald had started an oppressive wave of uncertainty and fear in his near constant attacks across Europe. Some students were even pulled from Hogwarts, their parents not trusting the school to protect them. All of the teachers were on edge, with Dumbledore faring the worst. Harry almost felt sorry for his transfiguration teacher. The man was sullen and bitter about the war, and made his feelings known in more than one class. Even Tom didn't know what to do.

One day in October, Dumbledore asked Harry to stay behind after class. If the murderous looks Tom shot the professor were any indication, he knew Tom did not want Harry to be alone with Dumbledore. But when Dumbledore practically shut the door in Tom's face, leaving both of them no choice in the matter, he knew he would hear of Tom's vicious complaints later in the common room. It was commonplace that Tom Riddle did not like Dumbledore—and even Harry felt sure...the feeling was probably mutual.

"Mr. Peters. Please sit down." Dumbledore said after a moment's pause, shuffling aside the papers and books on his desk. Harry just hoped he wasn't in any sort of trouble—he didn't think he could handle any detentions, not with the added workload of preparing for their OWLs this year, of course.

Dumbledore must have caught Harry's worry—for he smiled jovially (or as happy as he could be, giving the circumstances with Grindelwald) and offered him a lemon drop.

"No need to worry, my boy. You're not in any trouble. That's not why I asked you to stay behind. I have to ask though...how are you faring with young Mr. Riddle? I *have* noticed the closeness of you two boys over the years, and I understand you grew up in a muggle orphanage together. And yet... I can't help but feel that...Mr. Riddle is not the... greatest of influences to have—but you understand, don't you, Mr. Peters?"

Harry felt his irritation grow towards Dumbledore. Why was it—from Myrtle Warren to Albus Dumbledore—everyone seemed so keen to warn him against Tom? Harry *knew*. Even better than they assumed he knew. Harry had just saved Tom from literally *killing* his own *family*. And still, they thought he didn't understand. They all thought Tom was too dark, and he *was*, but they didn't see Tom's kindness and loyalty to those he considered close. True, Harry was arguably the only one in that category, but Dumbledore didn't need to know that. He only saw the bad in Tom, and it was getting to the point of irritating Harry beyond what he normally showed.

"I'm afraid I don't Professor." Harry said stiffly, which elicited a sigh from Dumbledore.

"I see. Well, it's of no matter now..." he mumbled before continuing.

"I'm afraid that some rather bad news has come to my attention. I have spoken with the Department of Mysteries about the matter, and they have agreed with my proposal."

"I am sure you have no idea what I am talking about, Mr. Peters, but alas, the DoM has been working on your case since last year, when I first became aware of the problem—and until very recently, they have devised a secure method to send you back. The device should be ready by the end of this year. I was appointed the task of informing you of this change, regardless of your knowledge on the matter. The DoM has strict policies, after all, regarding time travel. Now, seeing as your relationship with Mr. Riddle has developed into... dangerous territory... I am also... compelled with the task of eliminating this threat against the timeline..." he paused, then took out his wand.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Peters, for what I am about to do."

Harry's expression turned from confused to alarmed in a matter of seconds. He grabbed his own wand, but he was too late to stop the spell from hitting him in the face.

*"Obliviate."*

---

Tom was frustrated. Harry had been gone for a long time now. When Tom had allowed Harry to be alone with Dumbledore, he had not thought the boy would be gone for so long, even missing dinner. He bit his nails to prevent himself from taking his frustrations out on his followers. He was seated on his usual green couch by the hearth, surrounded by his Knights, and from the looks Lestrange and Abraxas were giving him, they knew well enough to stay away.

Orion Black, however, did not have the same sense of caution.

"My Lord...when did you say—"

Tom shot a nasty curse at him.

"Did I not tell you not to call me that in public, Black, where anyone can hear? Leave." Tom sneered down at him. Orion made a retreat out of the common room, looking like a kicked puppy with his tail between his legs. He would likely head to the infirmary too once Tom's delayed curse took hold. But Tom did not care. He didn't even care that Orion was Harry's friend. No, Tom was only concerned for his boy, who was *still* not back.

After another half an hour, and as it was getting close to curfew, Tom finally had enough. His anxiety would not lessen... and waiting around for the boy had clearly been the wrong choice. He decided to look for Harry if the boy was not so keen on coming back.

Abraxas nodded his head once when Tom left the common room. Tom trusted Malfoy just enough to know that he would also keep an eye out for Harry too, should he return to the common room.

Tom, meanwhile, would search the castle as best he could. Starting from where he had last left Harry.

Dumbledore's office.

---

Albus was by no means a terrible person, but he couldn't help but feel as though he had become one, looking down at Harry Peter's slumped form on the floor of his office. It was for the greater good, he told himself, even as he cast the required charms to prevent the memories he had planted in the boy's head from slipping.

His future self had heavily asserted that this needed to be done, whatever the cost. Tom Riddle and...Harry *Potter*...could not be friends, if the future was to remain intact.

Albus still couldn't quite believe it. That Mr. Peter's was from the future. The DoM had been terribly intrigued by the boy, until Albus told them of the imperative need to send the boy back.

Apparently, according to his dreams, a war had broken out, and due to a prophecy, the wizarding world needed Harry Potter back before it was too late. Mr. Riddle had become something of a nightmare for the future too. Even Grindelwald, his future self explained, did not compare to the...terror Tom Riddle would reign upon the world.

And that was another issue Albus had to deal with. His former love Gellert was terrorizing the European nations in his search for the Hallows. If Albus did not deal with this soon, he wasn't sure what would happen. His dream self had naturally been very vague on the matter, ensuring that they only spoke of the importance of bringing Harry Potter back to his original timeline. But if Albus knew himself at all, then he knew it was also in his cards to deal with Gellert before his war escalated even more.

The memories he was planting in the boy were small, inconspicuous things. He had looked into the boy's mind and found some rather startling memories, yes, but they were all memories he could use to his advantage. Just a small change here and there, and he would achieve his goal. Making sure Harry *Peters* stayed well away from Tom Riddle. Just long enough for the device to be made. Then, and only then, would the timeline be right again.

The boy would hardly even notice anything was wrong, other than perhaps a mild headache. All the changes would come as subtly as possible, wherein the boy's feelings towards certain memories would be altered ever so slightly. Albus also knew that Tom would evidently notice or suspect something foul (or more likely, suspect *Albus* of tampering). But he also knew that not even Tom Riddle, prodigy that he was, would be able to penetrate the memory charms he had placed on the boy. They were meticulous little things, and if one didn't know what they were looking for, then they had no way of knowing how to counteract the memory spell. If one did not know they were dealing with a memory charm, then any attempt to stop it was futile.

But it was only a matter of time until Harry was sent on his way. Even Albus did not know what would happen when the boy evidently went back to his own time. He did not know if anything would change *here*, or if the world would remain as it was now.

Either way, Albus would be prepared.

However much he claimed, however, Albus did not feel particularly accomplished when he finished the charms on the boy. The memories were complete, and it was for the greater good. The timeline would be intact for when the boy finally returned.

Still, he couldn't help but feel as though he had somehow... just become a villain.

## Chapter End Notes

So here's another chapter. Thanks for all the comments and likes, I hope someone enjoys :) So Dumbledore is meddling as usual. I wouldn't worry too much, it's just some plot I wanted to have in the story. I hope I didn't mess up the timeline, but again, if I did, I hope it all makes sense anyway. Thanks for reading :)

# Chapter 32

## Chapter Notes

So I was holding onto this chapter for such a long time, because I still feel uncertain about it...but I do feel it's the direction I want to go to get to a certain point in the story, to reach the eventual end of the story (which is still a ways away but getting closer I think). I have another chapter ready too, I think I will post it with this one, so you get two.

I hope someone enjoys the new chapters :)

Tom did not find Harry that night. He used their connection to feel for the boy's location, but when Tom followed it, he found himself, once again, on the seventh-floor corridor facing a blank stretch of wall. Harry was hiding, as the room itself was no where to be seen, although he could feel Harry just behind the wall.

Well, no matter. Tom would simply confront the boy tomorrow. He turned around, feeling uncharacteristically relieved for—what, exactly? That Harry was still here? That his older self, nor Dumbledore, had not taken the boy away from him?

Harry could not hide forever. He would tell Tom what happened *eventually*, and why he was choosing to sleep in the hidden room instead of the dormitory.

The next morning, however, Harry was still out of sight. When Tom arrived for classes, Harry was purposefully sitting in an unusual spot—well, not so unusual, the boy was next to Orion, but Harry often sat with Tom in Transfiguration, unless they were fighting.

*Were they?*

He didn't think so. Still, Tom shot Harry a look as he passed the boy, but all Harry did was huff and turn away.

So they *are* fighting. Strange. Tom could not recall anything he had done to invoke Harry's ire. Unless....

“Today, class, we will begin with a review session, before moving on to transfiguring animate objects into different animate objects, such as a rat into a frog. This will cover more complex steps from what we have already been doing and will require a finicky amount of wand maneuvering to perform the tasks I have set out for you. Now, who recalls last class when I asked you all to complete—”

*Dumbledore.* Tom narrowed his eyes. He must have said something to Harry...but what did Dumbledore know about Tom that Harry did not? It was mildly concerning, but not something overly taxing on Tom's mind. He would simply pry the details out of Harry later.

Dumbledore had nothing on Tom. Not even his illicit little group of Knights was known by the man, although Tom suspected he thought something was happening, with his ‘friends’ being so well-behaved.

As Tom worked through the class, however, there was a nagging sensation in his mind...something was not quite right.

---

Harry was very obviously avoiding him. Whenever Tom drew near, he would find some excuse to leave, ignore him, or simply walk the opposite way. It was mildly infuriating.

During lunch, Harry sat with Black and Prince, nothing unusual, if not for the fact he hadn’t spoken to Tom all day. Tom felt on the verge of breaking, but he would not let Harry win so easily.

He tried to recall anything he could have done, but he came up empty. Tom had not done anything at all.

*So why...?*

By evening, nothing had changed. Harry had successfully avoided talking to him for the day, but the day was not yet over, as far as Tom was concerned. Tom sat contemplating this by the fire while the rest of his Knights sat beside him, tense, if anything, because of Tom’s continued silence.

He was irritated by Harry’s continued absence, and if it showed to his Knights, they knew better than to annoy him by asking questions.

Soon, however, Tom had enough. If Harry wouldn’t speak to him, if he was avoiding Tom, there were other ways to get his answers.

The common room was blessedly empty by this time of night. Black came to meet him swiftly enough.

“You wanted to speak to me, m-my Lord?”

Tom was infinitely thankful he had cast the vow on Black. It had proven very useful over the past year, and especially now, when Tom would have had to otherwise force Black into telling the truth. He knew how... restrained Black could be, especially when facing something uncertain and potentially threatening towards his friendship with Harry. Tom knew the Black heir valued his friendship with Harry, even if his parents did not, and Tom had allowed it to bloom even despite his own misgivings. Black would do anything to keep Harry in his life. Even betray Tom...Tom felt certain of *that* too.

He decided to be rather blunt. There was no use in deception when Tom wanted answers straight away.

“Do you know why Harry has been avoiding me today?” Tom asked, causing Orion’s eyes to widen ever so slightly.



“You mean—?”

“Yes, I am sure even *you* noticed how distant he was with me today. Has he said anything? Tell me,” Tom casually leant further back into the chair.

Orion was silent for a few moments as he processed Tom’s words. That alone worried Tom more than he was willing to show.

“He did say something strange... earlier in the day. I didn’t think much of it—I thought you two were fighting. But asked me to...to help him stay away from you. He said he doesn’t want to speak to you. He...said he didn’t want to associate with you anymore.”

Tom tuned Black out as his words sank in.

*Harry doesn’t want to speak to him? Harry doesn’t want to see him again?*

Tom’s ears rang. He vaguely remembered ordering Black away, and while Abraxas was still sitting closely to him—*too* closely, Tom was suffocating—he somehow managed to find himself alone in the common room after what seemed like hours.

Harry doesn’t want to speak or see him again.

The words themselves sounded ridiculous. Harry was *Tom’s*, and the very fact that the boy even *thought* he could avoid Tom forever was ridiculous. It simply would not happen.

He gritted his teeth.

He knew he was being irrational, *emotional*, even. But the thought of losing Harry had his nerves on edge, his fingers itching to cast something, *do* something.

Without thinking, he made his way to the Chamber that night. He wanted to curse something, but instead, Tom sought comfort in the familiar surroundings. The place Harry had showed him, gifted to Tom, in his search for the Chamber.

Tom felt certain there was hidden parts to the Chamber. He was certain Salazar must have left more than an empty hall for his heir—a library, perhaps, or a study of some sort.

Tom called for the Basilisk. As she slithered down to greet him, Tom didn’t even close his eyes. He felt certain that she knew it was *him* who called her once again.

*“Heir...you have returned...tell me...what do you sssseek?”*

Perhaps it was a reaction to Harry ignoring him, but when Tom answered, he felt a strange sense of release....

*“Everything.”*

---

After spending the night in the Chamber, Tom had been mildly hopeful that Harry would speak to him again—that it was all a misunderstanding, that the boy did not mean

what he had said. But the next day found Harry avoiding Tom once again. The day after that, Tom thought to corner him and *talk*. But every time he drew near, the other boy slipped away just as quickly.

And as Harry continued to successfully avoid him, his carefully crafted Occlumency shields, designed to keep the dreams at bay, was cracking. So it wasn't that surprising, really, when Tom fell into the familiar dreamscape only one week after Harry stopped talking to him.

His older self was sitting in his customary chair, and for once, Tom was uncertain how the dream would proceed. Would he be tortured? Or put under the Imperius curse? At the knowing look his future self gave him, Tom held back his biting retort.

"I see Dumbledore has made his move. But you haven't figured it out yet, have you?"

Tom's heart was pounding. He scratched for his Occlumency barriers, but they were completely torn open.

"No. What has he done? *Tell me.*"

The older man smirked.

"I warned you of Dumbledore's threat, and you ignored me. Consider this a punishment for disobeying me. If you had done as I asked, none of this would have happened."

Tom felt a thundering rage at his older self, for denying him information related to Harry—but then, he felt the same anger directed towards himself. He knew the man was right. Tom *had* ignored the warnings over the years in favour of other things.

"I don't understand. Why are you working against me—*us*? If I know, I can fix it. I can—undo—whatever Dumbledore has done and—"

The man with red eyes smiled, in Tom's mind, rather cruelly.

"I *am* working for us, child. I am moving you forward. However, you seem to be under the delusion that we are the same person... *we are not.*"

At Tom's look, his older self continued.

"Oh, we are connected, trust me. I can still see the...influences you've had on my body. But the body is where our similarities, our connection, ends. We are not the same person. We do not have the same...*experiences*, shall we say."

Tom was at a loss. They were connected, but not the same person? Did that mean Tom had some semblance of control, then, in that he did not have to turn into the monster before him? Although he looked like an older version of Tom now, Tom still remembered the snake-like visage from his childhood. It had frightened him even more once he realized it was *his* future.

Tom's attention snapped back to his older self when the man took out his wand.

"It seems Dumbledore intends to take the boy away from you, and to pit him against me, as the prophecy dictates. I intended for the boy to stay with you, out of my way—however, if I must take over, then so be it; we will do this *my* way, and I simply do not have the patience to let you run loose again."

Tom scrambled up from the chair, his mind frantic to put back the Occlumency barriers.

What was the man planning to do?

He ducked as the curse flew over his head. He gritted his teeth as he took out his own wand—this was *his* dream too—and cast his own array of dark spells at the older man. To Tom's dismay, the man easily deflected all of them.

Tom put up the strongest mental barrier he could manage just before the spell hit him.

"*Imperio.*"

---

Tom woke with a gasp.

Was this it? Was he under the curse?

He...didn't feel different. In fact, he still remembered everything his older self had said. The dream was still vivid in his mind.

Then....

He shuddered; a chill ran down his spine once he realized.

*It must be conditional.* The man had... *allowed* Tom to keep his memories. And Tom would be in full control of his body, until the correct conditions for the curse were met. And then he would fall into whatever his older self had planned, his mind taken over and....

That...would not do.

Getting up, Tom looked over instinctively to Harry's bed. He was gone, the curtains open and his bed neatly made. Harry had been sleeping in the secret room for a week. It was silently grating on Tom's nerves.

But Harry could not avoid Tom forever. And now that Tom knew *Dumbledore* had something to do with it....

He willed his mind to relax. He stood up from the bed.

He simply didn't *trust* his older self, now especially, since he had all but confirmed they were not the same person. Connected, but different. If the man had Harry's best interests at heart...Tom simply did not know.

Nor if he had *Tom's* best interests either, although he claimed to be helping him...he would not put it past himself to be lying.

He had read about people resisting the Imperius curse. Tom wondered if he could do the same. It would be better to avoid triggering the curse altogether, however, just in case, Tom wanted to be able to stop himself from doing anything harmful.

He would need a great amount of willpower to resist the curse. Tom was confident he had enough power...but it wasn't power he needed. He needed *will*power—something that couldn't be defined, something that couldn't be taught through any amount of training. Tom had read enough books on the Imperius curse to know that willpower, the power to resist the curse, had only a vague understanding of what was actually required. Apparently, it was an inner feeling of strength...which, Tom now noted, was not helpful in the least.

In whatever form it came, Tom was not completely confident he could throw off the curse.

And that, above all else, terrified him.

# Chapter 33

## Chapter Notes

Here is the other chapter... I posted two chapters, hope someone enjoys, thanks for reading :)

Harry felt strange, but it was a relatively recent thing. For the past week he had felt... odd, out-of-sorts, and his head pounded in a rather unpleasant way whenever he thought too much. But what was more, he had to avoid Tom Riddle, his roommate at Wool's and his least favorite person at Hogwarts.

Oh, sure, they had grown up together. But that was about it. Harry could not recall a single, pleasant exchange between them during their childhood. He remembered living in fear of Riddle, of having to play nice with the other boy because if he didn't...well, he would end up like he did in the cave. And *that* was a bad memory.

Besides that, Harry had very nearly died when he tried to stop Riddle from murdering his family just this summer. As far as he remembered, Riddle had nearly killed his entire muggle family—and that was something Harry couldn't forgive. The only reason he had stopped was because of the maid. Harry had pointed out that if Riddle didn't want any witnesses, if he killed the maid too, it would have left too many traces that pointed back to him.

Harry had almost died that night due to Riddle's insanity. So, as of now, and after talking to Dumbledore about it, Harry felt certain he should just stop associating with Riddle altogether. It was for the best.

If only Riddle didn't have it in his mind that he wanted to talk to Harry. It took everything Harry had just to avoid the other boy and his persistent followers.

Lestrangle even went as far as pairing up with Harry for potions one class, and the other boy hated his guts. Orion sent him an apologetic look before Slughorn took over the lesson.

“Look, Peters. If you think avoiding Tom will last forever, let me tell you...”

But Harry had already mentally shut him out. He would avoid Riddle forever, if he could help it.

One week went by, and Riddle started to change tactics. Harry only noticed because the other boy stopped trying to pester him. Indeed, while Harry ignoring Riddle was somewhat obvious to anyone watching, Riddle soon took the same attitude as well. During class, the other boy did not so much as glance in Harry's direction, and at lunch, Riddle took

no more notice of him than anyone else at the Slytherin table. If anything, Riddle took even *less* notice of him than anyone else, his eyes drifting by Harry as though he were a fly on the wall. Which was fine. It was just what Harry wanted. He wanted Riddle to leave him alone; it was for the best.

*Then why—*

His head hurt.

---

Orion Black knew something was wrong with Harry. But what, why, how, were all things he couldn't answer. He seemed fine enough with Orion, but whenever Tom Riddle was involved, Harry would complain about a headache.

If it was just that, he might not have suspected anything. But when Riddle asked him for a favor (or, more accurately, used the vow to be certain Orion would obey), he knew it was something more... serious.

First of all, Riddle wanted him to trick Harry into meeting him at a certain spot. Riddle said he would take care of it from there. But it was Orion's job to make sure Harry went alone.

It was an easy enough task. Orion had already asked, and he knew Harry would meet him anywhere, even past curfew. But still. It was something Orion didn't *want* to do. What would Riddle do to Harry? Would Harry feel betrayed, given that the other boy would be expecting *him*, and not Riddle, to be there waiting?

Well. It certainly felt like betrayal. And that was something Orion had a hard time dealing with.

Ever since the dance was announced, Orion was feeling down about everything. He wanted to tell Harry about his possible family with the Potter's, but he also didn't want Harry involved with the current Dark Lord of Europe, who was targeting the Potter family. Add to that, Grindelwald was demanding on his father, trying to gain access to Hogwarts and, for some reason, *Dumbledore*. Orion had briefly met the insane man, once, over the summer holidays this year. It was excruciatingly painful, for when Orion met the man's eyes, Grindelwald had torn open his mind in an attempt to see if he knew anything useful.

When he was cleared and finally deemed insignificant, his father had ordered him to stay away from his study while the man was visiting. Orion had never been happier to obey his father.

As for the yuletide dance, Orion knew he would be expected to ask some pure-blooded girl in Slytherin—quite possibly Walburga, his screeching, banshee cousin in third year, the one who his father and mother had arranged for him to *marry*. The thought made him shudder. He *would* have had to ask her... if the dance wasn't restricted to fifth year and up. *Thank Merlin.*

No, if Orion had any say, he wanted to ask—

*No.*

*I can't.*

*He wouldn't even say yes.*

For years, Orion had been harboring a secret crush on his best friend. He had been of hopeful, at the beginning term, when the dance was first announced—hopeful and naïve enough to think that maybe, just maybe, Harry would agree to go with *him*. But then he had caught the dark looks from Riddle, the small smiles from Harry in return—and he knew, without a doubt, that Harry would want to go with Riddle. It was as obvious as daylight that they had something between them, and it depressed Orion even more when he thought about it.

But now, Harry was suddenly averse to Riddle in every way. It was strange, true, but Orion couldn't help it. He was getting all hopeful again. That maybe he still had a chance....

*Stupid. Don't even think about it.*

Because Riddle was oddly possessive over Harry, his childhood friend. Any attempts to distance the two would be met with Riddle's fury.

Besides...he knew the truth. If Orion *did* ask—if he even *thought* to ask—

Riddle would rip his head off.

---

When Orion asked Harry to meet him in the middle of the night, Harry had not thought much about it. When he said they needed to talk, Harry didn't doubt that his friend knew something was bothering Harry—just as, even since last year, Harry had known something was bothering Orion too.

To put it mildly, something was affecting their friendship. Harry felt he couldn't... confide in Orion, not nearly as much as he used to. Harry was silently worried that the other boy wanted to end their friendship, even after years of being friends—Orion had been oddly distant since the start of term, and not even Elieen could tell him why. And while Harry had been attempting to distance himself from Riddle, Orion had bore the most of Harry's frustration and anger. It was...unfair...to ask Orion to keep helping him avoid Riddle. In all likelihood, Orion was tired of Harry. He was, after all, heir to the House of Black. It wasn't like he *needed* Harry's friendship....

Shaking his head of his thoughts, Harry waited in a small, abandoned classroom on the third floor. Whatever he wanted to talk about, Orion was late. Harry had not been sleeping in the dormitory since last week, so Harry did not know when Orion had left. But surely, he must be coming soon.

Perhaps it was instinctual, but Harry knew something was off the moment the door creaked open—Riddle walked inside, with Orion hovering just beyond the boundary. His

friend looked so apologetic and worried, Harry did not immediately grasp what was going on until Riddle spoke.

“Thank you, Black. You may leave now.”

“Harry, I’m sorry I—”

“Leave.” And in a wave of wandless magic, Riddle slammed the door shut in Orion’s face. Harry did not have time to analyze his feelings of betrayal before his attention turned to Riddle, who, for some reason, was being cautious.

They stared at each other, and Harry felt his headache increase with every passing second.

“What do you want Riddle?” Harry said vehemently, tired of the games Riddle wanted to play.

But when Harry spoke, Riddle visibly flinched as though he had been slapped. Harry didn’t say anything surprising, but still... he wondered what had caused such a reaction.

“*Harry*. Did you really think you could evade me forever? We need to talk. Tell me what happened with Dumbledore last week... it’s the source of all this... confusion.”

As Riddle waited for an answer, Harry’s headache grew. He clenched his eyes shut to withstand the pain.

“I don’t—Dumbledore warned me about you...but I already knew. I decided I’d had enough of playing nice. You nearly killed your family, Riddle! You would have killed me too if not for—!”

Without warning, Harry’s voice was cut off with a silencing spell. He glared at the other boy for the interruption, but apparently, Riddle was looking at him with narrowed eyes.

“You—”

Harry’s wand was in his hand, banishing the spell and allowing him to speak once more.

“Leave me alone, Riddle. You have some weird obsession with me, just because we live together in the orphanage...but I barely know you at all. So, leave me alone. I’ll only ask once.”

Riddle seemed speechless at Harry’s tone. For nearly a minute, he didn’t say anything. He merely stared at Harry eerily from across the room, his dark eyes assessing and nearly black in the night.

Harry winced at a particularly sharp throb in his mind. He sank to his knees, clutching his aching head against the cool floor. Merlin, why did his headache have to be so active around Riddle, of all people?



“Don’t!” Harry shouted when Riddle moved closer, waving his wand aimlessly in the other boy’s direction.

“Harry—what?”

“Just leave me alone! Merlin, why are you so persistent? I don’t need—”

Harry’s headache was only building, and his vision was blurring, but he needed to stand up and leave. Only doing so was proving too much of a challenge. Riddle was watching him struggle to his feet—damn him—before Harry finally collapsed to the floor, shivering from an unexpected chill.

Harry didn’t think he imagined the concerned look on Riddle’s face as he finally succumbed to the darkness—it was impossible, but then again, Harry was too tired to care.

---

As Tom followed Black that night to the designated spot, he did not know what he was expecting...but in truth, he did not anticipate the conversation to go the way it had. Harry had called him *Riddle*, for instance, not Tom. That had...unexpectedly hurt.

But something was wrong. That much was obvious. Whatever Dumbledore had done to the boy, it was clear now that it was causing Harry to be physically unwell. When Harry sank to his knees, and it took every ounce of self control not to go immediately to the boy’s side. He finally lost this control when Harry collapsed to the ground, his face going deathly pale and clutching his head.

Was it his scar? No, that wasn’t—

“Black! Get in here.”

He knew the foolish boy had been waiting at the door, wanting to apologize to Harry for his apparent betrayal. Tom did not care. He needed an explanation.

When Orion hastily opened the door, he stopped at the sight of Harry on the floor.

“What—? What’s going on? Why is—”

“Was there anything you forgot to mention, Black, when we last spoke?”

“I don’t under—”

Tom sighed, then left Harry on the floor as he rounded on Black.

“I do not have time for this. I should have done this earlier. *Legilimens!*”

Tom hastily entered the Black heir’s mind, searching for a cause to Harry’s sudden collapse. He searched for the most recent memories, held back his anger when he realized Orion’s *intentions* for the dance, and then found what he was looking for.

Black collapsed himself from the sudden intrusion when Tom finally exited his mind.

“A headache. It seems you forgot to mention this?”

“I’m s-sorry... my Lord, I didn’t think—” Orion whispered, but by then, Tom had already had enough of the other boy’s presence.

“Get out. I’ll deal with you later.”

“Yes...” When Black finally left the room, Tom turned back to Harry.

If this truly *was* Dumbledore’s doing, then there was nothing the medical ward at Hogwarts could do. The school was, essentially, in Dumbledore’s pocket. If the man wanted to keep Harry from Tom, then the staff would only readily comply.

No, this was something Tom had to deal with alone.

He had thought—had been terrified really—that being alone with Harry would trigger the Imperius curse on himself. It was the reason he had allowed Black to come along, after all. However, it seemed that either Tom’s occlumency barriers were stronger than he thought...

Or this was not the correct situation. His older self was waiting for something else to happen. What, Tom couldn’t possibly know.

Harry had said some very disturbing things, especially his accusation about Tom murdering his muggle family. Tom had silenced him from speaking about it openly—Black was at the door, after all. But the one thing that stood out the most was his claim that Harry barely knew Tom at all, and the assumption that they only associated because they lived together in the orphanage. Along with the boy’s headache... it was, quite possibly, the one thing Harry had said that made the least amount of sense. If Tom did not summon Harry himself, he might have believed the boy. If Tom did not spend every minute of his childhood with the other boy, the boy he had gifted to himself... Tom might have bought into those painful words.

But it was a mistake. Combined with the presence of a headache, a common symptom, it was the one thing that made it clear to Tom what exactly he was dealing with.

A memory charm. Possibly targeting the memories of Tom himself.

He felt it, then. A murderous rage at Dumbledore. How dare he touch his Harry? It was the only thing that made sense, and the only thing that seemed so ludicrous too... Tom was almost willing to believe it was Gellert Grindelwald himself who did this, not *Dumbledore*, leader of all things good and light.

As Tom knelt down next to Harry’s unconscious form, he felt simultaneously hopeless and lost. He could obliviate people. He could sweep into their minds and plant false memories, like he did at the Riddle house. But he was not an expert in *fixing* false memories...and wasn’t that the irony of the entire situation?

He gritted his teeth. He had to do *something*. Dumbledore could not win.

For now, however, Tom decided to levitate the boy back to the dormitory. He would need to research how to fix this properly. Tom would scour the entire Hogwarts library if that's what it took. He still had to find a way around the Imperius curse, but that could wait, now that it seemed the curse was waiting for something more specific to happen. Besides, Tom knew the longer one waited to fix the memories, the harder it would be on the person once they were undone. Tom did not want Harry to suffer for anything he said or did under the influence of Dumbledore.

When Tom placed Harry safely back in his bed, taking off the boy's shoes and pulling up the covers, he knew what he had to do...and it angered him beyond belief.

If his headache was any sign, Tom's presence was clearly causing the boy mental anguish. So... until Tom could fix this...he would have to stay away.

If the thought was much harder to process for the rest of the night, Tom found solace in only one thought.

That, once everything was right again, he would *murder* Dumbledore.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!