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The door was at the beginning of the train car, so they had to wait for everyone else to push their way out to a small, dark platform. Diana couldn't help but shiver; the Scottish Highlands proved to be far colder than London. Her insides kept twisting into knots, both from nervousness and from the odd, foreign place where she would spend the next nine months.

The wands of a few older students ahead were lit, softly illuminating the surroundings as they made their way into the distance towards something that looked like a carriage stand. She looked enviously at the sight; the desire to be able to do the same burned like a fire inside of her.

The shadows began to dance as a lantern bobbed over their heads, and Diana gaped; an impossibly tall man, face barely visible from his long, shaggy beard, was holding the lamp. He was almost twice as tall as her father, and Henry Taylor was one of the tallest men she'd ever seen!

"Firs' years! Firs' years over here!"

Yet, for all of his titanic size and booming voice, he should have been quite imposing, but the man's black eyes were as warm as the summer sun. The rest of her future year-mates quickly converged toward the lantern, and she and Harry followed.

The giant looked around the sea of faces carefully as if searching for something, then nodded to himself. "C'mon, follow me – any more firs' years? Mind yer step, now! Firs' years follow me!"

Slipping and stumbling, they followed Hagrid down a steep, narrow path. It was a miracle Diana managed not to fall; it was so dark that the only thing that could be seen under the soft light of the swinging lantern was a few vague outlines of trees surrounding them.

Nobody said a thing; only the footsteps and a few croaks could be heard from the surroundings, chilling her even further.

"Yeh'll get yer firs' sight of Hogwarts in a sec," the gigantic man called from over his shoulder, "jus' around this bend here."

Exclamations of surprise and wonder filled the small clearing, and one had even escaped Diana's mouth. The narrow path had led them into the wide shore of a great black lake, stretching endlessly into the darkness. Perched atop a high rocky cliff across the vast expanse of water stood a vast castle with many turrets and towers. It was grand in size, and it made for a mesmerising sight as the windows sparkled in the starry sky, no less impressive for some of the masonry being mismatched in size or style.

Yet when she looked at her companion, he looked stoic; Harry was standing still, gaze blank, not nearly as impressed as the others. Yet his eyes were forlorn, and a soft smile tugged at the edge of his lips.

“No more than four a boat!” The man’s voice rumbled through the darkness as he pointed towards a fleet of little boats sitting in the water just by the shore.

Diana looked critically at one of the empty boats softly swaying on the water. Couldn't they take carriages like the older students? What if they fell into the lake? She was a decent swimmer, but the mere thought of dipping into an icy loch in the Scottish Highlands made her shiver again.

Harry, however, got onto the boat nonchalantly and waved her over. She hesitantly followed and inspected their ride; it was far more stable than a boat this size had any right to be.

Two more children joined them – a girl with long, raven hair and grey eyes and a tall boy with carefully combed auburn hair and pale blue eyes. Harry was eyeing both of them with thinly veiled curiosity.

“Hello,” she cautiously greeted them, “I’m Diana Taylor.”

“Lily Moon,” the girl nodded.

“Name’s Fabian Fawley,” the boy bowed lightly. His voice was measured and polite, similar to the noble scions she had met before. And just as snobbish as them, evident by the haughty gleam in his eyes.

“I’m Harry,” was her friend’s laconic reply.

“No surname?” The short boy simply shrugged at Fawley’s question, causing him to snort. “Alright then, I suppose I’ll find soon enough anyway.”

“Everyone in?” The gigantic man’s shout thundered through the clearing. Under her disbelieving gaze, he climbed onto one of the boats, which visibly dipped under his weight. She thought it would sink for a moment, but it somehow stayed afloat. “Alright then – FORWARD!”

The fleet of little boats moved all at once, gliding seamlessly across the lake. While some of her other schoolmates were gazing at the slowly approaching castle with awe, Diana was amazed by the boats themselves. This could only be magic.

Magic!

There was no sound of rotors; they were far too stable with none of the characteristic swayings that accompanied travelling across the water, and all of it was silent to boot! Coupled with the miraculous transportation of their luggage, it painted a pretty picture.

A whole new world, filled with magic and wonder, waiting to be explored! The air was quickly filled with exciting chatter as the apprehension died, and her nervousness was replaced with anticipation. She shook her head and focused on the present.

“Do you know who he is?” Diana waved towards the titanic man at the front.

“Rubeus Hagrid,” Harry’s voice was soft and measured, “Keeper of Keys, Grounds, and Gamekeeper of Hogwarts.”

“Is it normal for people to be this… tall in the wizarding world?”

“No,” her friend shrugged, looking rather uncomfortable.

“I heard he had a potion mishap while young,” Moon whispered.

“Potions are that dangerous?!”

“If you muck them up badly, yes,” the grey-eyed girl bobbed her head. “My grand-uncle died in a potion accident. Although some say that his father was cursed or that Hagrid is half-giant.”

Wait, how would that even work? Diana tried hard to remember what she had read about curses and giants in the books she had bought in the summer.

“There’s no way the man is part-giant,” Fawley scoffed dismissively. “The beasts are little more than savage brutes, and the groundskeeper is famously harmless.”

“I suppose so,” Lily Moon easily agreed.

“What about curses? Can a curse cause someone to be this tall?” Diana couldn’t help but ask.

Gods, the wizarding world was shaping up to be as scary as it was exciting. Although if she could magic herself to be taller…

“There are charms to change the sizes of objects, including living things, but none too permanent and dangerous if used on humans. But it should not be… impossible,” Harry rubbed the bridge of his nose. “Using magic to meddle with your body is incredibly dangerous. You’re far more likely to become a permanent resident in the Janus Thickey Ward than succeed.”

“The Janus Thickey Ward?” She echoed curiously.

“Saint Mungo’s permanent spell damage ward,” Diana blinked in confusion at Harry’s words. “Saint Mungo is the wizarding hospital.”

Right, so no trying to magic herself taller. Diana most definitely didn't want to be stuck in a hospital bed for the rest of her life.

“You’re a muggle-born?” Fawley asked haughtily.

“Err, yes?”

And the boy promptly looked away from her and pretended she did not exist. Lily Moon seemed undisturbed by the revelation, but Diana saw her edge slightly away from her. She had seen the rich and influential family children ignore those of lesser origin, and this felt… similar. It was odd to be on the receiving end of such… thinly veiled distaste. Diana threw a questioning glance at Harry, who simply mouthed 'purebloods, later', so she settled for ignoring the two pricks.

Or at least, she tried, as they began conversing with each other, as she and Harry were not there, but Diana couldn't help but listen in.

"Hey, Fawley, is it true that your uncle is going to retire soon?"

"Well, I rarely get to see him," the haughty boy hummed thoughtfully, but his chest was puffed up. "Uncle Felix is always busy at work. Although working in law enforcement is cool, he always said he wanted to travel the world, so I wouldn't be surprised if he resigns soon."

"Won't he try for the Minister in the coming elections? After nearly ten years as head of DMLE, he has plenty of connections to compete for the post," Lily Moon needled.

Diana groaned inwardly; who the hell cared about politics at their age? It was so boring! They shouldn't have to worry about lame stuff like this for years to come…

"Yes, uncle is great," Fawley proudly agreed, then his face twisted into a scowl. "Father says he'd easily beat both Fudge and Macmillan. A pity though, Uncle Felix dislikes politics too much to try for the post."

"God, Ernie is going to become unbearable if his father gets elected," the girl scowled.

"He's not that bad, and you worry for nothing. Fudge will roll over Henry Macmillan with ease," the tall boy seemed oddly confident with his statement.

The cliff that bore the castle began looming closer and closer.

"We'll see soon enough, I suppose," Lily shrugged her shoulders and began playing with her raven locks before her eyes lit up. "Do you think Harry Potter will come to Hogwarts?"

"Where else would he go?"

"Ilvermorny, Beuxbatons, or even Durmstrang, all good schools that would be glad to take him," the girl straightened up. "It is not out of the question if he's tutored privately either."

"Maybe, but none are as good as our Hogwarts. Every single Potter has studied here, in Britain. Although rumour has it Potter has been raised by muggles, you know?" Fawley's face scrunched up. "According to Uncle Felix, Potter would be little better than a muggle-born. Have you seen the Potter family tree?"

Diana saw Harry stiffen next to her.

“Nope, it’s not an easy thing to find,” Moon mumbled. “And who cares about dusty tomes of old lineages?”

“Well,” the tall boy smirked, “Knowing one’s roots is important, Moon. My family does hold records of all the important family lines. Potter’s grandmother was a Carrow, and after his godfather got imprisoned, he was supposed to stay with the Carrows as they were his closest relatives, according to my Father.”

“But he didn’t,” the girl’s brows scrunched in thought. “The Boy-Who-Lived has not been seen ever since that night.”

God, this Harry Potter character was far more interesting than Diana thought. Although it was befitting for a celebrity. If only those two kids weren’t as stuck up…

"Precisely. Supposedly, a few of You-Know-Who's followers were Carrows and avoided Azkaban, so Dumbledore pulled some strings and sent him to his muggle relatives instead after getting the ministry to seal their names and locations with magic," the boy snorted. "I mean, why else did we not hear or see a thing from Harry Potter ever since Hallow's Eve?"

“Heads down!” Hagrid’s voice boomed through the chatter as the first boats reached the cliff.

For a short moment, Diana wondered if they would crash into the bedrock or if it was a hidden entrance, similar to Platform Nine and Three Quarters. All bent their heads and passed through a curtain of ivory directly into a wide opening beneath the cliff's face.

Thankfully, everyone, including Fawley and Moon, grew silent as the boats carried them through a pitch-dark tunnel, with only the lone lantern in Hagrid’s hand illuminating the rocky surroundings.

They reached an underground harbour, probably beneath the castle, where they clambered onto the rocks and pebbles below.

They ascended through a passageway hewn into the solid rock and finally came out onto a grassy field nestled just beneath the looming castle.

After a flight of smooth stone steps, they faced a tall, arched oaken gate.

“Everyone here?” the titanic man’s voice echoed as he carefully looked around them. A moment later, he nodded to himself, raised his gigantic fist and knocked on the castle gate thrice.

The castle gate opened immediately, revealing Professor McGonagall in a similar green robe that Diana had seen her before. The kind, soft face that the tall old witch had worn when showing her and her parents around Diagon was replaced with stony sternness.

“The firs’ years, Professor McGonagall.”

“Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here.”

The gate swung open, revealing an enormous antechamber that could fit half a football field inside. The stone walls were all polished and lined with torches, finally bringing banishing away the darkness of the night. Elaborate suits of full-plate armour holding halberds, swords, and shields stood vigilant along the length of the walls as decoration. Diana looked up, but there was no ceiling, only darkness extending far above the distance. Across them was a grand staircase lined with marble, making for a formidable sight.

Hagrid's tall figure disappeared inside the castle, and the witch led them through the flagged stone floor. They passed a large wooden doorway to the right where you could hear the drone of hundreds of voices - it seemed that the other students had arrived already. Eventually, they arrived at a small side chamber, where they had to crowd together far too closely for Diana's liking.

"Welcome to Hogwarts," the professor turned to them with a cough. "I am Professor McGonagall, the head of the Gryffindor House and the Transfiguration teacher. The feast will start soon, but first, you'll be called in to be sorted into one of the houses."

The witch took a deep breath, and her gaze roamed amidst the first years.

"The houses are named after each of Hogwarts' founders - Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each has a rich, noble history that has produced countless outstanding wizards and witches. While you're at Hogwarts, your success and triumph will bring glory to your house in the form of points - and your misdeeds and rulebreaking shall result in their loss. At the end of the school year, the total points of each house will be tallied, and the winner will be awarded the House Cup, a great honour! Any questions?"

Surely the cup would mean little if it could change hands every year and gave no tangible benefits to the winners other than pride and bragging rights? Although there could be some to be mentioned later on.

A nervous, lanky, red-haired boy with a smudge on his nose raised his hand weakly.

"How will we be sorted?" he asked, voice breaking. "My brothers told me we must fight a magical creature to pass."

The witch's lips thinned so much they almost disappeared as a handful of students sniggered.

"I assure you, Mr Weasley, that there's no fighting involved." The boy nodded, slightly calmer than before.

The professor looked around, but nobody else raised any questions. Diana's eyes roamed around curiously and spotted a few of the kids she had seen on the train platform and inside the compartments. Their earlier confidence or haughtiness was replaced with nervousness and excitement. Only Harry seemed as calm as the cold lake outside, but she noticed his fingers flexed on his right hand as if grasping for something.

Her new friend also threw a few sneaky looks at the red-haired boy with the smudged nose that had asked a question, a sandy-haired chubby boy, and a girl with wild, bushy hair and a bossy expression that stood out quite a lot.

“Follow me,” the woman turned and opened the large door behind her, revealing an enormous chamber.

The insides were magical: thousands of candles floated above four long tables where all the older students were already sitting, whispering amongst each other or tossing appraising glances at the group of first years. At the dias of the hall stood another table, where adults, probably the school staff, were already sitting. The cutlery, plates, and goblets were all silver or gold. Diana looked above and gasped; instead of rafters or an arched ceiling, it looked like the starry sky outside.

“It’s said to be enchanted a thousand years ago by Rowena Ravenclaw herself,” Harry whispered next to her as they slowly trained like ducklings behind the tall, stern witch. “A feat supposedly left unrivalled to this day.”

They eventually stopped in front of the high table. Most of the staff gazed intensely at their group, searching for something, but none seemed to find it. Professor McGonagall placed a four-legged stool before the high table and deposited an incredibly old and worn-out pointed wizard's hat atop it.

The whole hall quieted down as everyone looked intently at the hat. It looked both ancient, as if it was going to fall apart at any moment, and unwashed. Diana barely held in a gasp as the hit twitched, then a rip near the rim opened wide like a mouth, and it began singing. It took her a few moments to gather herself and pay attention to the now-finishing song.

“- So put me on! Don’t be afraid!

And don’t get in a flap!

For you’re in safe hands (though I have none)!

For I’m a Thinking Cap!”

Diana was still flabbergasted as the whole hall burst into applause. A few of the other first years around her looked relieved, especially the lanky ginger who muttered something about ‘trolls’ and ‘killing Fred’.

Never would she have guessed that they'd be sorted by a talking hat. If nothing else, the song confirmed and expanded Harry's short explanation of the Hogwarts Houses. They all seemed interesting, but Diana would avoid Slytherin if it was filled with haughty snobs like Fabian Fawley.

“When I call your name, you will sit on the stool and put on the Sorting Hat. Once your name is announced, you’re to join your house at their table,” McGonagall explained while looking at a long roll of parchment. “Abbot, Hannah!”

A round-faced girl with blond pigtails stumbled out of their line, sat on the stool and placed the old hat atop her head, covering even her eyes.

It was so silent that you could hear a pin drop, but a few seconds later, the hat opened its mouth-like seam: “HUFFLEPUFF!”

The table filled with students clothed in black and yellow erupted into cheers and claps as the girl quickly joined them.

The next girl, a redhead named Susan Bones, also ended up in Hufflepuff, much to the delight of her housemates. Diana zoned out amidst the cheers and ovations as the students were quickly sorted into various houses; at least the process seemed quick and painless. Most of them barely had the hat touch their heads before screaming, while the longest so far had been little more than a dozen seconds.

“Fabian Fawley!”

“Hufflepuff!”

Soon, a pair of blonde twins - a boy and a girl, were sorted in Slytherin, receiving quite a substantial ovation.

“Lestrange, Juno!”

The hall became deathly quiet, and a tall, raven-haired girl gracefully slid across the marble floor. Her steps were measured and confident, and the so-called Juno seemed to be the very picture of elegance as she sat on the chair. Her deep-blue eyes were as sharp as needles as she impassively gazed back at the other students, uncowed by the attention, before the Transfiguration Professor placed the hat atop her head. Hell, even with the worn-out Sorting Hat, she looked charming.

There was a tension, heavy tension weighting in the Great Hall, and Diana could see more than a few students look far more intently at the tall girl on the chair, some of the gazes heavy with hostility. The chubby boy with sandy hair seemed so angry that Diana wouldn't be surprised if he began to spit fire, and his meaty fists were clenched so hard that the knuckles had gone white.

For the first time, Diana saw Harry stunned; her friend goggled at Juno Lestrange for a moment before composing himself, but his usually placid expression had hardened. The seconds ticked by, yet the Hat remained quiet.

“What’s the deal with her?” she whispered. “Why’s everyone looking as if someone died.”

"I don't know," Harry's words were quiet yet laced with a hint of wariness.

“RAVENCLAW!”

Nobody clapped or cheered; the Great Hall was filled with surprised muttering as Juno Lestrange calmly walked to the Ravenclaw table and sat down. Eventually, a slow, powerful clap from the high table tore through the silence, and Diana craned her neck to see that it came from the benevolent old man with a long white beard sitting in the throne chair in the middle. Probably the headmaster? Slowly, Ravenclaw and, surprisingly, Slytherin joined in, albeit not very enthusiastically.

The angry boy, Neville Longbottom, went into Gryffindor the moment the hat touched his hair. Diana noted how the girl from the boat ride, Lily Moon, was sorted into Slytherin. The number of unsorted students quickly dwindled; surprisingly, another pair of twins from India were here, both girls, although one went to Ravenclaw and the other one to Gryffindor, and then-

“Potter, Harry!”

A tidal wave of whispers flooded the great hall, discussing the famed boy. Some were quite loud.

“*Potter*, did she say?”

“*The* Harry Potter?”

“I saw none with a lightning bolt scar or glasses,” an older girl added thoughtfully from the Ravenclaw table as the handful of unsorted students were heavily scrutinised by everyone, including the staff table.

For a short moment, Diana wondered if the famed young celebrity had decided to attend another school, but then her friend confidently stepped forward.

She gaped as the quiet, helpful boy she had spent the whole train ride with strode forward with a straightened spine.

“Where are his glasses?”

“Shouldn’t he have a scar?”

“Is this truly Potter?”

Yet Professor McGonagall did not seem very surprised as she calmly placed the hat atop Harry’s face as soon as he sat down, covering his vivid green eyes.

As the hall was filled with fervent expectation, Diana sank deep in thought. For a short moment, she felt betrayed but then realised that her friend had never offered his family name, and it was pretty clear why. Half a minute later, she nodded to herself. Harry had been honest with her, forging a genuine friendship unburdened by things like fame or family names. The minutes stretched, and the cacophony of chatter only increased as everyone intently gazed at the short boy sitting on the stool.

Harry knew the Sorting Hat couldn't truly read minds; it could only sense a person's thoughts and traits, as was its original purpose. Otherwise, nobody would let their young children put it on. Yet, he still felt a twinge of nervousness as, once again, everyone gazed at him with curiosity. He grimaced inwardly as the hat was placed upon his head; there went the pleasant feeling of just being another face in the crowd. Oh well, at least he had nearly seven years of practice ignoring it.

"Hmm, hmm," the Sorting Hat's troubled voice echoed in his ear after nearly a minute of silence. "It's been quite a while since I faced *such a difficult choice. Talent, daring, hard work, and ambition in spades, all of the founders would have loved to have you in their house. There seem to be quite some caution and wariness in you; Gryffindor would ill suit you. Helga's house looks like a good fit, but while you're hardworking, your loyalty seems far more to yourself than others. I sense great ambition and cunning aplenty within you; Salazar's House would be most fitting. You'll do -"*

'Not Slytherin,' Harry immediately interrupted in panic. Being in the same house as Draco and his bookends was not an appealing prospect, even seven years later. He even doubted he could spend a month in the house of the snakes without suffering a heavy accident. While the blonde ponce was just a boy now, he still held the haughty arrogance Harry remembered, albeit a tad more subdued.

"You could be great there."

'I can be great in other Houses too! Putting me in Slytherin will only beg for trouble both for me and the others in the House. Put me in Ravenclaw!'

A tinge of fear churned in his stomach; his stay in the house of the Snakes could end in only one of three ways - him dead, in Azkaban, or the Janus Thickey ward.

"Not Slytherin, eh? The second one tonight! If Salazar could see this, he would weep as all the good seedlings want nothing to do with his name," the hat clicked its non-existent tongue, *"But yes, I can sense it now. Your stay in the House of the Snakes would be far too turbulent and fraught with danger. Well, if not Slytherin, better be* - RAVENCLAW!"

The Hat was removed from his head by a regretful-looking McGonagall, and a deafening cheer and boisterous applause from the eagles almost stunned him. This was the first time he saw them so enthusiastic about... anything, really.

"We didn't get Potter?" The Weasley twin's surprised voices made him chuckle inwardly. Gryffindor was full of bitter memories for him; Harry didn't think he could go there and not go mad. Bloody hell, even the hat said he was no longer suited for the House of the Brave.

He shook his head inwardly, quickly turned to the Ravenclaw table, and joined an empty seat near the first years. Thankfully, while his housemates were quite enthusiastic, they decided better than to approach or annoy him, although the numerous glances at his face and brow were more annoying than usual.

Juno Lestrange's existence was an… unwelcome oddity. The girl he had met in Madam Malkin was now carefully appraising him with piercing blue eyes. He just hoped she was less of an annoyance compared to Malfoy. Although judging by Neville's murderous glare, she was most certainly the daughter of Bellatrix Lestrange.

That definitely explained why the girl looked rather familiar; she was a younger, far calmer, and prettier version of her mother. In fact, Harry had barely resisted the urge to draw his wand and curse the eleven-year-old who had done absolutely nothing to him. Shame had quickly filled him, and it wasn't like he could even cast a decent curse right now…

Hermione was again sorted in Gryffindor. The rest were quite similar to what he remembered, although Harry hadn't paid too close attention. Fabian Fawley, a completely new face, had calmly discussed his whole family tree, making him find out for the first time that his grandmother had been a Carrow. Regretfully, he couldn't even remember if that was the case in his original timeline, as he had never asked about his grandparents… The cold Daphne Greengrass seemed to have a twin, Damien, who looked just as cold and haughty as his sister.

Harry politely clapped along as the handful of students were quickly sorted, and, unsurprisingly, Diana ended up in Ravenclaw. More surprisingly, she popped into the empty seat to his left instead of joining the other first years. They were practically alone at the edge of the table.

"Your sorting took ages. You never told me you were famous?" Her whisper was soft, without even a hint of heat in it.

"Does it matter?"

"I suppose not," she shook her head weakly. "Although I could do without all the stares."

Surely enough, they attracted the attention of half the table like a magnet. Thankfully, the eagles were just content with observing from afar from now. Harry clapped vigorously as Ron was sorted into Gryffindor, and the final student, Blaise Zabini, went into Slytherin again.

Diana's stomach decided to grumble, and her face flushed almost as red as her hair.

"Do you think they'll serve the food soon-"

Dumbledore stood up and coughed loudly, his face beaming widely at the students. Harry still felt conflicted about the old wizard as he gave his usual short, nonsensical speech and simply decided to hold onto his caution.

As the headmaster sat down, the table was instantly filled to the brim with dishes, and Diana's gaze lit up from amazement, or quite possibly hunger.

"Isn't he a bit too… barmy to be the headmaster?" she asked quietly while piling roasted mutton and mashed potatoes onto her plate.

"Maybe a bit," Harry couldn't help but chuckle as he greedily grabbed roasted potatoes, beef steak, and gravy. He didn't hold a grudge against Dumbledore, but any previous trust and admiration were long replaced with caution. "He's more than a hundred years old, you know."

“He barely looks sixty!”

“Wizards and witches age a tad slower than muggles,” he explained absentmindedly. “It’s not impossible for some to live over two hundred.”

“Neat!” Diana cautiously glanced at her goblet filled with pumpkin juice. “Do you know what this… is?”

“Pumpkin juice.”

Her face scrunched up in disgust, and she groaned.

“Can’t we have something normal to drink? Even water will do.”

She gaped as, a moment later, her goblet’s contents were suddenly gone and quickly replaced by water.

They began to eat, and Harry's gaze drifted towards the staff table. Sadly, Snape's eternally scowling face was still there; there were no new faces besides a small, minor change. Or, well, not so minor. Quirrell was standing there, but his turban was absent. On top of his head was carefully combed brown hair, his robes were neat and tidy, and a charming smile sat easily upon his lips as he was chatting with Trelawny. There was no nervousness, meekness or stutter; confidence and charm had taken their place.

Was Voldemort still there without the turban? His scar was unresponsive, but then again, it had faded almost completely. Tom Riddle’s soul shard was gone for good, and with it, Harry’s connection to the Dark Lord. A soft squeeze on his left forearm alerted him Nyx had woken up from her nap.

He quickly forked a piece of small beef while nobody was watching and placed his hand under the table. His snake cautiously snuck out and gobbled the piece before retreating to her place around his forearm. A talk with Flitwick awaited him, and Harry hoped his diminutive Head of House would be amiable enough to allow him his new companion. He doubted he could hide Nyx for his whole stay in Hogwarts; she had already shown herself a tad too curious for her own good on the train.

With a shake of his head, Harry focused on his meal; he would deal with things as they came, just as he always did.

Author’s endnote: Oy, oy oy, you got a *loicence* for all those OCs, mate?!

That’s it with the OCs, I promise. Most of them are just me expanding on the world-building a bit or recycling characters that JKR scrapped at some point.

You'd probably notice that HP's grandma was not Dorea Black. I thought long and hard and ultimately decided to do away with the direct Black connection. That horse has been beaten to death too many

times, and I find it annoying now. Yeah, yeah, I know it's a widespread version of Fanon and all, but it's a tad too convenient. In the books, there's no mention of Harry's grandparents by name. Dorea still married Charlus Potter, Fleamont's brother, making him Harry's grand uncle; thus, Harry has no direct blood ties with House Black in the last few generations.

Overall, HP's grandma in the released Pottermore was not given a family background, but we know she's pureblood. So I decided to share a fanon setting with Bub3loka and roll with a Carrow(a cousin from a cadet branch/etc. Those goddamn noble Houses don't consist of a single line, especially after surviving for centuries, mind you. I'm not confirming anything, but I am pointing out that important/wealthy families seldom dwindled to a single heir/lone child scenario. Cousins were common more often than not), and there are plenty of reasons for them to be skipped as HP's guardians (legal technicalities that Dumbledore abused).

Now, a curious thing that caught my attention in the books: Ron knew Harry was raised with muggles on the train ride. Or, well, he heard about it as a sort of a rumour, so that definitely floated around in the wizarding world one way or another.