

Writing Harry

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Writing Harry

by [avioleta](#)

Summary

After the war, Harry Potter begins writing letters to Severus.

Original prompt: Epistolary

Notes

Especial thanks to Badgerlady for the skillful, quick beta and for her kindness. I am grateful she is always there for my fics.

Thank you to Jocundasykes for the lovely, open-ended prompt.

Harry is 18 at the beginning of the story. All sex is consensual.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

22 December 1998,

Prof. Snape,

I'm sorry.

I imagine you don't want to hear it. Or you don't care. But it's important I say the words anyway. We wouldn't have won without you, and you didn't deserve what happened. I only wish I'd trusted you sooner, though you would have been a shit spy if I had. And you weren't—a shit spy that is.

So thank you for everything. And, again, I'm sorry.

Harry Potter

The first letter arrives on a Tuesday.

Severus doesn't respond.

Potter is right: He doesn't want an apology. And he doesn't care what the Boy Hero or anyone else in the Wizarding world has to say to him.

3 January 1999,

Prof. Snape,

I hope my letter found you well—if it found you at all. Bartleby assures me he delivered it, but I can't always trust him. He'll do pretty much anything for owl snacks.

I haven't told anyone I've written you. Ron would think I'm crazy and Hermione would tell me to leave you alone. But I think, if we could talk—or write—it might be good for us.

I have your memories.

I wasn't going to send them by owl post. Not until I knew for certain I'd found you. But they're safe.

H. Potter

4 January 1999,

Potter,

How did you find me?

I cannot begin to fathom why you think I desire a pen pal.

S. Snape

The brown owl appears at his window again the following morning. He taps impatiently against the glass while Severus folds the paper and sets down his cup of tea. When he opens the window, the owl flies in and lands on the table, inspecting the remains of his breakfast expectantly.

His own owl eyes him impassively from his perch.

“Message first. Then a snack, you cretin,” he says, and the brown owl holds out his leg dutifully.

Severus’s hands only shake a little as he unwraps the brown paper parcel.

Memories are silver tinged. Streaked with blue. Flecked with gold.

They shimmer as he turns the glass between his fingers. He sets the phial aside again.

Severus is not even sure what all he showed the boy—what thoughts and images spilled forth as he lay dying on the floor of that filthy shack.

He considers not opening the letter, considers setting it aflame with a flick of his wand.

Instead, he takes a sip of tea.

5 January 1999,

Prof. Snape,

I didn’t find you. Bartleby did. He’s a good boy. Good at owling. I figure you’re still in England, though. Hermione said you didn’t go back to Hogwarts. I understand. I couldn’t go back either.

Here are your memories. Thank you for entrusting me with them.

HP

Potter,

Thank you. For returning my memories. And for your testimony after the war, during the trials.

S. Snape

Severus finds the words aren't that hard to write, after all.

You were innocent, Snape. And a hero. I wasn't going to let you go to Azkaban. Surely you know me well enough by now to realise that. Though, honestly, between the testimony Dumbledore left and his memories, I'm not sure you even needed me. Meticulous fucking bastard.

I'm glad you got your memories back. I'm sorry I wasn't able to get them to you sooner. It must have been uncomfortable without them.

HP

Severus does not tell Potter that he isn't sure he even wants the memories. That he hasn't decided if he's going to put them back in his head. He doesn't tell Potter anything. Frankly, he's unsure why he's responded to the boy at all.

The glass phial Potter returned sits on the counter by his bathroom sink.

There is some debate on the longevity of stored memories.

Some argue that they begin to break down in as little as two or three years. Others believe you have a decade before any notable signs of deterioration appear. Longer, still, if they're stored in a Pensieve.

Severus does not have a Pensieve.

He knows he should replace the memories. There is nothing to be gained by waiting. The longer he waits, the more time his mind has to grow accustomed to their absence. But, still, he cannot bring himself to do it.

12 January 1999,

Prof. Snape,

What are you doing now? Since you're not at Hogwarts?

I hope you're well.

I'm okay. Some days are better than others, but my therapist says that's normal. I'm seeing a Muggle one. She's helping some, I think. Loads better than the Mind Healer St. Mungo's assigned me after the war. That was a disaster. But I'm sure you don't want to hear about it.

I spent a few months on the continent—I just needed time away from everything. But I'm back now. Can't keep running forever, you know? Despite how tempting the prospect.

*Do you think you'll ever go back to teaching? How do you decide?
How am I supposed to know what to do now?*

HP

14 January 1999,

Potter,

Will you please cease this ridiculous exercise immediately? Surely you have something better to do than assail me with letters.

Minerva has asked that I consider returning to Hogwarts next school year. Apparently Horace is retiring for good this time.

S. Snape

15 January 1999,

Do you ever feel that it's all just a dream? Sometimes I worry that I never actually woke up in the forest again. That I didn't come back to kill him. Maybe I'm dead and this is all some elaborate hallucination. My mind playing one last, horrible trick on me.

HP

16 January 1999,

Potter,

You are most assuredly not dead. What are you doing with that shrink of yours?

SS

Good thing that. Seeing as how I'm the 'Boy Who Lived.' Otherwise things might get awkward. We spend a lot of time doing meditation exercises. She's also big on visualisation and makes me run through a series of affirmations every day. Perhaps I should add: 'I am not dead' to the list.

HP

Severus does not laugh at Potter's note. Nor does he admit that he doesn't find the inane prattle of the letters as annoying as, perhaps, he should.

Potter's owl—Bartleby—is traipsing about on his kitchen table and begging for scraps as if he owns the place. His own owl is out hunting. It's for the best; Severus doesn't need any of Bartleby's ill manners to rub off on him. He takes the box of owl treats from the cupboard and holds out a handful. The creature has the audacity to regard the snack sceptically before taking one in his beak. There's a crunch and the owl swallows. Then he glances around the table once more, as if checking to see if something better is on offer.

"It's all I've got, you derelict."

The owl hoots rather indignantly but takes the remainder of the snacks Severus has set upon the table.

"And no. I do not have a reply for you tonight."

19 January 1999,

How did you decide you wanted to be a teacher?

Was it something you always knew you wanted to do? Or was it just because you were good at it? (I do think you were good at teaching, you know. Even if you favoured your Slytherins something terrible and you didn't seem to like it very much.)

I always thought I wanted to be an Auror. But now... Now I think I only thought I wanted to be one because everybody else thought I should.

Hermione wanted me to go back to school. She says I still can—finish the year properly and sit for my N.E.W.T.s. But I won't—I can't. I've been back. For the dedication of the Memorial, but that's all.

Do you think you'll go back? That you'll teach again next year?

HP

21 January 1999,

Potter,

Surely there is someone better suited to give you professional advice.

You would make a good Auror, but that does not mean you should become one if it's not what you wish to do.

I have not made a decision regarding Hogwarts.

S. Snape

28 January 1999,

I'm tired, Snape. Tired of the expectations. Tired of never being enough. And I'm tired of owing life debts. So many fucking life debts. Sometimes I hate that I survived when so many people didn't. And I hate that I've never been without a life debt to someone.

For once, I'd like to know what it feels like to be free. To not have any debts, obligations, or expectations hanging over my head.

HP

You do not owe me a life debt.

SS

Severus does not write anything else. He does not say the obvious—that Potter saved the entire bloody world—that he will never owe anyone a goddamned thing ever again.

He does not think Potter would believe him anyway. The boy's always been a martyr.

And thank Merlin for that. Albus was right, in the end. Potter's sacrifice was necessary. And Severus will never fail to be amazed that he was strong enough. That he was able to walk into that forest and let the Dark Lord cast that curse. And then, somehow, miraculously and against all odds and explanations, that he managed to survive. To come back from the dead to kill him when no one else could. To end things once and for all.

30 January 1999,

Is there anything—aside from Dreamless Sleep—that I can take?

I can't sleep. Whenever I close my eyes I see things I don't want to see. I remember things I don't want to remember. But Dreamless Sleep—

Sometimes I worry I might take too much.

HP

You are seeing a Muggle therapist? What have you told her about your circumstances? Has she been of any help?

I can brew you a calming draught, but you must assure me you have discontinued all use of Dreamless Sleep.

S. Snape

I don't have any more Dreamless Sleep. I threw it out.

I see my therapist once a week. Even though I can't tell her everything, it's good to talk sometimes. And it's better that she doesn't know who I am. That she doesn't know anything about me.

We can't talk about the war, obviously. But she knows a little about my childhood. She thinks I'm suffering the after-effects of some type of trauma. And I've hinted at a near-death experience. Which is true, of course. As is the trauma, I suppose, between the Dursleys and Voldemort and fighting in a goddamned war.

HP

Severus has seen enough fragmented memories of Potter's childhood to know he was mistreated—sometimes horribly—by his relatives. And while he understands the magic involved, knows the boy had to return to Petunia Dursley's home each year to invoke the protection spells Dumbledore wove, he sometimes wonders if the benefits gained were not outweighed by the abuse Potter suffered. That alone—the emotional and, at times, physical trauma—was enough to leave lasting ill effects.

And that's before you add in the years of terror Potter suffered as he was targeted again and again by the Dark Lord.

Severus knows. He lived it too. But he was older. And he, guided by years of prejudice and poor choices, signed up for it. Potter never had the luxury of choice. He was targeted by a madman, thrown into a war by nature of his birth. And every step of the way—with each increasingly impossible thing Albus asked of him—he lived up to, defied, and exceeded all expectations.

It's a wonder he hasn't been committed to the Janus Thickey ward.

1 February 1999,

In case you were wondering, Bartleby prefers the owl treats from Eeylops. He has assured me that the generic brands are just not the same.

You can get them by owl order. Or I'll have some delivered, if you like?

He also likes bacon sandwiches. Biscuits, too—though, really, he's just partial to the chocolate kind with the raspberry jam.

What's your owl's name?

HP

Severus is not sure if he should laugh or take offense at the fact that Potter's owl has apparently complained about the quality of his owl snacks—owl snacks that seem to suit his own owl perfectly fine, *thankyouverymuch*.

If he decides to send a note to Eeylops inquiring about the pricing and ingredients in their line of owl treats, no one needs to know about it.

3 February 1999

Kevin

SS

Your owl's name is Kevin?

That is not what I was expecting.

HP

P.S. Kevin likes the fancy owl treats from Eeylops too.

The name suits him.

How did Bartleby get his name?

SS

I named him after a story I read once. "Bartleby the Scrivener," by Herman Melville. The library at Grimmauld has a fair amount of Muggle literature. That surprised me at first, but I think Sirius must have enjoyed it.

But anyway, this story—have you read it?

It's quite sad. But the main character reminds me a bit of myself. You see, Bartleby is capable. He could be successful. The story implies that he has been before. But he wakes up

one day and just decides he's done. When his boss asks him to do something he says, 'I would prefer not to,' and that becomes his trademark for the rest of the story.

It's funny at first because, can you imagine? Refusing to do your work—or anything really—because you'd 'prefer not to'? But it resonated with me because sometimes I feel as though I've done so much and now I'd just prefer not to.

But it's a reminder too. Because Bartleby is depressed and, in the end, he dies because he can't bring himself to do anything at all—even eat.

And I won't let that be me.

HP

Something about Potter's letter makes Severus's chest ache. He doesn't like the feeling.

The boy is depressed; Severus knows this. He's clearly suffering from anxiety and likely a degree of post-traumatic stress. He also seems to be experiencing some intrusive thoughts.

He wonders briefly if he should contact someone. Arthur Weasley? The Granger girl? But Potter has made reference to his friends. Severus does not believe that he has isolated himself from them, nor does he believe Potter suicidal. And, Muggle or not, any therapist with even a modicum of sense will have identified these concerns.

Severus will brew him something—non-narcotic, of course. Something he could not overdose on, should he ever feel inclined to do so. And, for the time being, he will continue to indulge the boy's inexplicable and no doubt misguided desire to correspond via owl post. After all, someone, clearly, has to look out for the brat.

10 February 1999,

Prof. Snape,

Thank you for the calming draught. I think it's working.

HP

You are taking it as directed?

Two drops on my tongue every night before bed.

15 February 1999,

It's nice, having someone to write to.

I know you don't have to do this—I'm sure you find it tiresome. But I want you to know I appreciate it.

HP

17 February 1999,

Will you tell me about my mother?

HP

Your mother liked music. We would listen to records together in my old room. It was one of the few things my father approved of—music, that is. He bought me the record player for my 10th birthday. And a few albums.

*Pink Floyd, Piper at the Gates of Dawn
Led Zeppelin, I
David Bowie, Space Oddity*

It's funny, the details you remember. For all his faults, my father had good taste in music. Lily loved The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. She bought me 'Let it Bleed' as a surprise. We listened to that album for hours.

SS

Your mother was clever.

She excelled at Charms and was above average at Potions. We were paired together once. Fourth year. Slytherin had Potions with Gryffindor. That was my favourite class I took at Hogwarts.

No one understood why your mother was my friend. She was pretty and popular and Slytherins are so different to Gryffindors. We keep to ourselves. Had Lily and I not known each other from home, we likely never would have spoken to one another. I do not mean that as a slight against her. She was my best friend. For a time, she was my only friend. But I know that I was not hers. For everything we had in common, there were ten differences between us.

But to this day I consider myself lucky that she was my friend at all.

SS

We're not so different, really. Gryffindors and Slytherins.

I know you loved her. I could tell from your memories. Would you have married her?

Severus considers denying it but decides not to. Had Potter wanted to hurt him or humiliate him, he would have done so already. And, unlikely as it seems, they have established a rapport. Severus finds he does not wish to lie.

I did and yes. Had she wanted to—were I able to make her as happy as she deserved to be—I would have married her in an instant.

SS

Even though you're gay?

What do you mean? How do you know that?

Your memories.

Nothing explicit—you don't have to worry about that. There were just a few things I saw. And I could tell.

Students talk, too. It wasn't only that I saw your memories. There were rumours—that you slept with men. Sirius said something once, too, in passing.

I am quite certain I do not wish to know the things Black said about me.

No. Likely not.

22 February 1999,

Sometimes I think about how much I like magic—all magic. I don't like hurting people, and I never want to have to kill anyone ever again. But that doesn't change the way strong magic—

dark magic—makes me feel. There's this allure. I can't explain it without sounding mental. Or maybe dangerous. But it's one of many reasons why I don't want to be an Auror. I understand how someone could be drawn to it. And sometimes my power scares me. I hate thinking that people are right. The ones saying I could be as bad as Voldemort if I let myself be.

Potter,

You were asked to do more than anyone had a right to ask of you. And you did such, not because you enjoyed it, but because it was necessary and no one else—not even Albus Dumbledore—could have succeeded.

As for what people say about you—ignorant people will always fear what they do not understand. And others will be jealous. Jealous that you have power they do not. Jealous you can do without thought things they can merely dream of.

And, finally, regarding dark magic, do you truly believe a man who became a Death Eater—who has invented dark spells and even darker poisons—doesn't understand the appeal?

There is good and evil in all of us. And goodness isn't the absence of all evil thoughts, or even evil potential, but the conscious choices you make every day to act according to your morals, according to what's right, in spite of everything.

SS

27 February 1999,

I've decided I'm going to take my N.E.W.T.s. I owed McGonagall. For the first time, she's making exceptions and letting students sit for exams on a case-by-case basis even if you didn't finish school properly.

I'll need to revise, of course, but I think I'll be fine. And it will be good to have my qualifications. That way, when I do decide what I want to do, no one will think an exception was made for me because I'm Harry Potter.

You are Harry Potter. And now you have earned every bit of recognition you receive. You will always be the Boy Who Lived. But you are also the wizard who defeated Voldemort. That accomplishment cannot be taken lightly.

SS

You could tutor me.

Potter,

Why in Merlin's name would you think I'd agree to such a thing?

You seem to enjoy talking to me.

I most certainly do not.

Well, it would give you something to do, anyway. Keep you busy. Make you feel important.

5 March 1999,

Do you have any potions that can undo permanent sticking charms? I've got a portrait that's giving me trouble.

No, but I have a dissolving agent that should work. Nasty stuff. Wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

Perfect.

Severus's owl has never been busier. There are days when Kevin makes the trip to and from Islington and Grimmauld Place three or four times without complaint. He's happy using his wings and his magic. And, it seems, he enjoys spending time with Bartleby.

"What's come over you?" he asks Kevin one afternoon, as the owl paces back and forth on the window ledge. "Potter wrote yesterday. Surely I am due for a day or two's respite." The owl hoots, clearly unconvinced. "Would you like to go to Hogwarts? I promised Rubeus a salve for his Nifflers. They've got into Pomona's greenhouses again and apparently developed quite the rash from the Bubotubers."

At that, Kevin merely turns his back to Severus, peering out the window once again.

"Kevin," Severus admonishes, "we cannot neglect our obligations because we'd prefer sit around waiting for possible visitors. Take the potion to Hogwarts and you can visit your friend on your way home. I'll even write a letter granting you permission to stay overnight, if

you'd like to go hunting with Bartleby." This gets Kevin's attention. He turns toward Severus again, tilting his head as though considering the proposition. Then he holds out his leg for Severus to affix the parcel.

7 March 1999,

How did you do it? How'd you survive that bite? There was so much blood.

You saved my life. Surely you know this. Had it not been for your magic and the dittany, I wouldn't have lived.

There wasn't enough dittany. And that snake. Fuck, Snape. That snake.

I'd taken precautions. Antivenin. Every day for months. But it was your magic, in the end.

I shouldn't have left you there. I'm sorry. I thought you were dead.

It was for the best. You had a war to win. And I was weak. Better the Dark Lord think he'd succeeded in killing me. I would not have survived a second assassination attempt.

I still can't believe you survived the first. How's your neck?

Scarred.

I'd like to see it sometime. The scars.

Why?

9 March 1999

When did you first know you were gay?

HP

I did not realise we were on such familiar terms. Are we asking personal questions now?

Third year.

SS

Personal, huh? If you'd like a personal question, I can do better than that.

Third year? Wow. I'm not sure I even knew there was such a thing as sexual preference third year. But then again, I don't think I knew much about sex at all then. Aside from wanking. I knew all about that.

Potter,

Stop thinking whatever no doubt depraved thought it is you're thinking. I assure you I was not testing out my newfound predilections at thirteen. I had merely recognised by then that I was different. That I was not attracted to girls in...that way.

How did you know?

Christ, Potter. We are not having this conversation.

How does anyone know what turns them on? While my dorm mates were fixated on tits, I found I was far more interested in cocks.

Cocks and tits? Snape, I think you've rendered me speechless.

Whatever shall I do?

Don't worry. I've recovered.

Are you seeing anyone?

Surely Severus should find the question impertinent or, at the very least, off-putting. But, for some reason, he doesn't. He prefers not think about the fact that he is now on such terms with Harry Potter, that the boy has worked his way into Severus's thoughts and has clearly clouded his sensibilities. More and more, though, he finds himself thinking about Potter. Wondering how he spends his time in Sirius Black's old home. Potter must be lonely. What else could explain the letters?

Severus has inquired about Potter's friends. He knows he sees them, goes out with them on occasion. And Severus is glad that Potter does so, that Potter has remained interested in their lives. He knows Potter envies them for having made decisions—found courses of action, career paths to pursue.

Despite what some may believe, Severus wants his students to succeed. And while he now knows more of Gryffindors than he cared to know before, he is pleased to hear they're doing well. He only hopes that Potter will find something that makes him happy.

Ron Weasley is in the Auror training programme. The Granger girl has accepted a position with the Unspeakables. Ginevra Weasley and Luna Lovegood are completing their seventh year at Hogwarts. The Longbottom boy is pursuing his Masters in Herbology. George Weasley, still grieving the loss of his twin, has thrown himself into his work. Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes is thriving and, last Potter heard, looking to expand into Hogsmeade, should the aging Zonko prove amenable to a buy-out.

11 March 1999,

Not that it's any of your concern, but no. My life, of late, has not exactly been conducive to relationships.

The 'of late' part is a bit of a stretch. His life has never been conducive to relationships. But he doesn't need to tell Potter that.

Severus looks down at the note before scrawling a hasty postscript.

P.S. Since you persist in asking inappropriate and personal questions, shall I ask you about your love life?

I don't think you mind, Snape. Or else you wouldn't keep responding to me. I know you're not doing so strictly for Bartleby and Kevin's benefit. Though, they do seem to enjoy each other's company.

No. I'm not seeing anyone. To use your words, my life isn't exactly conducive to relationships right now either. Hasn't ever been, really.

Gin and I were together for a time. Or, at least, I think we were. And I think she was hoping we'd be together again, properly, after the war. After everything. But I can't. We won't make each other happy. I just wish she understood that.

Surely Ginevra does understand. Despite what she might have wished for—a life with the hero is an appealing prospect, no doubt—she is not a fool. She must realise that you are not compatible. And you deserve to be happy.

SS

15 March 1999,

Ron and Hermione got engaged. They'll be married next spring. Molly and Arthur threw a party. It was nice to see everyone. It had been too long. I'll admit that. I haven't been the greatest of friends—not recently, at least.

But Charlie came in. And Bill and Fleur. Gin Floo'd from Hogwarts. And Andromeda brought Teddy.

Gin is upset with me, though. I was right about that. I know she wants more. Wants things I can't give her. She sees what her brother and Hermione have and it's hard. I understand. Part of me wants that, too. To find that person that's meant for me. And Gin and I do make some sense. But I know now we're not supposed to be together. I can't be who she wants me to be.

As I said before, you deserve to be happy. And you do not owe anyone anything, regardless of expectations.

Does Ginevra know your preferences? Despite what she may think she wants, surely she knows that sexual compatibility is a crucial component to happiness in a relationship.

Please give my congratulations to Mr. Weasley and Ms. Granger.

My preferences?

How did you know? Is it that obvious?

But yes. In school when we were together, she knew I'd been with boys. I think it intrigued her at first. And then, when I went abroad, she didn't seem to care all that much. Not about the men. She'd ask when we'd Floo occasionally, but as long as it wasn't another girl...

Still, I think she thought it was just a phase. That she expected me to get it out of my system—whatever the fuck that means—and come home to her. But that's not going to happen.

Severus knows Potter's words should not bother him. That he should not be...jealous at Potter's admissions. And is that what it is? Jealousy?

While Potter has not explicitly shared what he was doing during his time on the Continent, Severus knows there was alcohol. And there were men. Women too, perhaps.

It's absurd, really, that Severus cares. He has no right or reason to feel this way. What Potter did in the year following the war—aside from providing testimony in his defence—is none of his concern.

Potter,

You yourself mentioned school rumours. Surely you realise that it goes both ways. I was a Head of House, not to mention a spy. Professors hear things. And while there was always a retinue of young women hoping to get you in bed, half my Slytherins would have sworn you preferred to fuck men.

They were right.

I never fucked anyone, though. Not in school, at least.

I have no idea why you feel compelled to share this information with me.

SS

You asked for it.

I did not.

17 March 1999,

Snape,

I just have to say, seeing your handwriting again—

I never told you, but there was a time when I had the biggest crush on the Half Blood Prince.

That is...disturbing.

Well, it was when I discovered he was actually you!

But the Prince was funny and clever. And ~~he~~ you'd created all these spells. I still don't know how you do that, by the way. Write magic.

I think I've started to come around to the fact that the Prince was really you, though.

You're incredible.

I most certainly am not.

My mother created magic. I grew up learning that, if you wanted magic to do something—and you had the right words to channel it—you could write your own spells.

And Potter, I am certain you do not need to write spells to make your magic do whatever you like.

19 March 1999,

You know what? A little while ago, Witch Weekly asked to photograph me for a story they were doing.

I declined. So they used some old photographs they had on file from the Triwizard Tournament.

You know what piece they're running? It just came out today: Witch Weekly's Most Eligible Wizards. Apparently I'm #3.

And the pictures they used? Snape, I look like I'm twelve.

You were twelve.

And you do realise, had you agreed to their photo shoot and, no doubt, the accompanying interview, you would have been #1?

I was fourteen.

And really? #1? You think? Huh.

Should I tell them I'm more of a Wands and Wizards kind of bloke?

Potter,

If you ever pose for Wands and Wizards, I will buy ten copies.

I'll keep that in mind. Though, you know, if you want to see me with only my wand, all you have to do is ask.

Harry Potter, Witch Weekly's 3rd Most Eligible Wizard

22 March 1999,

Does your Mark still hurt? My scar does sometimes. Only when I dream, but then I wake up and my mind has to sort through what's real and what's not. I have to remember all over again that it's over. That he's dead. It's enough to send me into a panic attack. And sometimes I'm terrified that the pain won't go away. That my scar will start hurting again for real, that I'll hear his voice again—that sickening hiss telling me such terrifying things.

Voldemort spent so long sending me bad dreams, it's a wonder I'm not used to it by now. But I still worry that his darkness is inside me somewhere.

And, honestly, I don't know how I lived with that perpetual headache.

HP

My Mark hasn't hurt since that night. The night you killed him.

Severus does not add: The night we both should have died...

Instead he asks: Did your head always hurt? When you were in school?

He remembers back to Potter's fifth, his sixth year. How pale he was. The bruises under his eyes. The haunted look on his face. It was clear, even then, that he was not sleeping. But Severus had not understood why. Now, he cannot begin to imagine what Potter went through, with the Dark Lord inside his head. It's enough to make Severus ill.

Yes. From fourth year on, the headaches were pretty constant. Sometimes it was worse than others. I didn't fully understand it, at the time, but it all depended on Voldemort's mood. I

took a lot of pain potion. It wouldn't always touch it, but usually it helped some. And I was used to it.

I hate them. The dreams. And the way they make me feel when I wake up.

25 March 1999,

Why'd you join him?

Why'd you become a Death Eater?

There are many answers. I imagine you already know some of them.

I was young, foolish, and prejudiced. The Dark Lord offered recognition and he offered power. He was charming and, for a time, I bought into his rhetoric, his idealism.

But most of all, perhaps, I joined him because he wanted me. And it felt good to be wanted.

SS

A few days go by without a response and Severus wonders if Potter has finally had enough. If he's finally realised that this—whatever this is they're doing—isn't worth it. Severus expected it to happen. Expected Potter to tire of the exercise and find something else to occupy his attention. He did not expect to feel disappointed.

29 March 1999,

Sorry I haven't written. Something came up.

And I think I understand, you know. Why you did it. Why you joined him.

HP

Potter,

You have no need to apologise. I would hope you have better things to do than sit about writing to me.

Should I ask what you were doing?

SS

I like writing you.

Ron and Hermione dragged me to dinner—said it had been too long since we'd had a proper night out together. Which, honestly, was true. But Hermione set me up with some bloke from the Ministry. So I guess I was on a date?

I cannot believe I am asking you this, but how did it go?

SS

You're not fooling me, Snape. I know you're dying to hear about my love life.

It was awkward, for one. I think Ron's still holding out hope that I'll end up with Gin. And I didn't ask for a date, anyway.

But he was nice enough, I suppose. Attractive—if you're into blonds, that is. And smart. He has a job, too, which is more that either of us can say at the moment, so there's that. And he wanted to talk about things other than the war. So many people only care about me because I'm Harry Potter, but this chap actually seemed interested in getting to know me for who I really am. And he works for the Department of Magical Games and Sports, so it was nice to talk about Quidditch.

Sounds perfect, right?

He seemed to like me, too, but I don't know. It's not what I want. I don't think I'll go out with him again.

Not into blonds, are you?

Because surely your lack of interest couldn't stem from the scintillating Quidditch conversation.

Hey, I'll have you know that Quidditch can be quite the scintillating topic of conversation. Do you have any idea how arousing flying can be?

And no, I'm not into blonds.

I can't say I've ever been aroused by a game of Quidditch. This is the type of thing you talk about on a first date?

Of course not, Snape. I didn't want him to think I was coming on to him.

And I'm not turned on by Quidditch. It's the flying part.

Flying?

Come on. I know you've been on a broom before. It's the adrenaline. And your cock pressed against the cushioning charms. God, I love flying. But there were times I'd get so turned on during Quidditch...and it wasn't because I'd spotted the Snitch.

Then afterwards— Well, I'm sure I'm not the only one who ever wanked in the showers after a match.

Potter,

That is, perhaps, the most disturbing thing I've heard all week.

How many disturbing things have you heard this week?

You'd be surprised.

You were at school. You can't tell me you never wanked in the showers.

I did not play Quidditch. But I might have—as you so eloquently put it—wanked in the dormitory showers once or twice.

That's... That's really hot, Snape.

Potter,

What are we doing?

Isn't it obvious?

Severus doesn't know how to respond to that. Surely, *surely*, Potter isn't flirting with him. The idea is absurd. And Severus would swear under threat of Veritaserum that he has no idea what Potter wants. Still, if the boy was saying these things to anyone else...

Severus tucks the latest note away with the others and pours himself a drink.

He does not wonder what it means that he's kept each letter Potter's sent.

I don't know what you want.

I know I don't want to talk about Voldemort, or your Mark, or my anxiety, or my power. I don't want to talk about dying. And I know, with you, that's okay, because I know you also understand.

1 April 1999,

For blood coagulant potions, do you need to type the blood like you do for replenishers? Or are they universal?

HP

There is a spell the Mediwitch or wizard will perform to assure the patient does not reject the potion. Blood typing isn't necessary.

SS

2 April 1999,

So, you've told me that you did not have your first sexual experience when you were thirteen. How old were you?

HP

Potter,

I feel compelled to state how utterly inappropriate this conversation is.

SS

Of course it's inappropriate. That's part of the fun, isn't it? That no one would approve.

I'll go first. Sixth year. In the prefects' bathroom. I had no idea sucking cock could be that... erotic. I nearly came from that alone.

You were not a prefect.

That's what you take away from my story? No, I was not a prefect. But the wards were easy enough to bypass, and that tub is amazing.

Were you a prefect?

HP

No. And I've never had sex in the prefects' lavatory either.

I was seventeen. Slytherin dormitory. It was enjoyable.

'Enjoyable,' huh? That's quite the endorsement.

I've had better and I've had worse.

3 April 1999,

Severus,

Have you given any more thought to my proposal? Will you at least join me for tea so we can discuss your return to Hogwarts?

Say, Tuesday at 11?

Minerva

4 April 1999,

What do you think about when you're in bed?

HP

I assume you're not asking about concerns over whether I left the cooker on, or if I'm running low on a particular potions ingredient?

Are you truly trying to ask what I think about when I masturbate?

SS

Fuck, Snape. Who knew the word 'masturbate' could be so sexy.

Yes.

9 April 1999,

Do you know what I like, Snape? What really turns me on?

Do I want to know?

Magic.

I like blowjobs.

SS

11 April 1999,

Go out with me, Snape.

I don't think that what's you want.

Yes, it is.

12 April 1999,

I met with Minerva last week.

SS

Yeah? Has she convinced you to go back yet?

Nearly.

15 April 1999,

Can you use a potion to dissolve blood magic?

HP

You can, but only if you have the blood of the caster.

And if you don't have that?

The spell should fall apart on its own. You know this. The vast majority of spells cast with blood are personal—the caster uses his or her own blood for the spellwork—and should that person die, the spell is rendered unnecessary.

Right. Or a stronger wizard or witch can use someone else's blood to cast a personal spell for them, and the same concept applies. But what if a wizard uses someone else's blood to cast a personal spell? Does the spell unravel if his victim or donor dies?

Potter,

They will not ask you this on your exam.

But could you undo it?

You can't dissolve the magic, but you might be able to key it to someone else.

6 April 1999,

Sometimes I think I might be going crazy, but I can't stop thinking about you. It started with the memories I think—once everything was over and I had time to process it. But having you in my head? It's a tad like Occlumency, you know?

Potter,

I am a practised Occlumens. I am aware of the feeling.

And judging from your recent forays into inappropriate correspondence, I'd say you've decidedly gone round the twist.

Good thing I have someone to talk to, then.

18 April 1999,

Let's have dinner—or a drink.

HP

I don't think that would be wise.

I'll wank for you. If you'd like that.

I... I would.

20 April 1999,

Potter,

This is madness.

SS

There are crazier things, though, right? Than you and me.

26 April 1999,

Spend the anniversary with me. Please. I don't want to be alone. I can't. Not for this.

Wouldn't you prefer to be with your friends? Surely they are planning something.

Potter should not be alone. That's for certain. But he should be with his makeshift family, with people that love him. Not with Severus.

Yes, Molly and Arthur are having everyone over after the Memorial. Charlie's coming. And Bill and Fleur. George is bringing Angelina. And, of course, Ron, Hermione, and Ginny will be there. They've invited Andromeda. She'll have Teddy. And Luna and Neville and his nan will be there. Kingsley will probably even come, but I just can't.

I know I should be there. For Molly. This is going to be so hard on her. But I can't. Not now.

We don't have to go anywhere—I'd rather not, really. You can come to Grimmauld Place. Kreacher can make us dinner and we don't have to be alone.

Severus must be out of his bloody mind. Why else would he be standing outside the door of 12 Grimmauld Place?

At the very least it's woefully ill advised. But Severus knows there is something about Potter. Likely there always has been. And what started as an innocuous lark, a harmless indulgence—writing back, encouraging the ridiculous back and forth exchange—has turned into something more. Something that means *something*.

“Oh—” Potter looks momentarily surprised when he opens the door. He's dressed casually in loose khaki trousers and a faded Gryffindor Quidditch t-shirt. He's got a dishtowel in his hand and his feet are bare. Then he smiles, wide and genuine. It does something absolutely lovely to his mouth. “You came.”

“I said I would.” Severus feels distinctly uncomfortable. One look and Potter has him entirely off balance. It's not a feeling he's used to. Potter looks different—older now—but of course he does. It's been nearly a year since he last saw him and so much has changed since then.

“I know, but I'm used to being disappointed.” The words clench painfully in Severus's chest, and he doesn't know what to say. But Potter is ushering him in, and Severus is saved from responding.

The foyer is not as dark, not as gloomy as Severus remembers. The sconces lining the entryway flicker brightly as he follows Potter to the narrow stairway leading down into the kitchen. He glances up to the landing above. The curtain that used to conceal Walburga is drawn back; her canvas is now awash with colours. Blocks of reds and blues and greens spill down the painting in a Rothkoesque design.

“I told you it worked,” Potter says with a laugh. “I quite like it now. And there's the added bonus of her not waking me up at all hours, howling obscenities and cursing half bloods.”

“And the elves?” Severus asks, looking further up the stair.

“Attic. Kreacher threw a bloody fit when I went to banish them. He's got it in his head that he'll be memorialised with them one day.”

“Naturally.”

The kitchen is warm and welcoming. A fire glows brightly in the hearth. Potter tosses the dishtowel on the worktop and takes two beers from the cupboard, holding one up to Severus.

He nods, and Potter waves a hand across them absently, popping the caps. He hands one bottle to Severus before taking a long swallow from his own. His smile is like a key, twisting with warmth in Severus's belly.

Kreacher has prepared chicken with boiled potatoes and greens. There's also fresh bread, which Potter pulls from the oven and spreads with soft butter. They sit across from each other at the long table. Severus watches Potter's hands, his mouth as he eats. People have forever been drawn to Potter like moths to a light. But Severus wanted to think himself resistant to his charms.

But now...

Merlin, he's gorgeous. Severus was entirely unprepared for that and now, now he finds he can't take his eyes off him.

Dark hair, longer now than Severus remembers. The pale column of his throat. The defined curve of his cheekbone and strong line of his jaw—darkened slightly by a day's worth of stubble. Yes, Potter is beautiful, and now that Severus has acknowledged the thought, he can't get it out of his mind.

He looks down, cuts a piece of chicken. His knife scrapes against the plate. Beneath the pooling gravy, he sees the outline of the Black family crest.

Potter laughs. "I like to imagine what Sirius's parents would think if they only knew who was living here, using their things."

Severus can't help but smile at that, and Potter grins.

"You'd no doubt have Walburga and Orion rolling in their graves."

The rest of the meal passes pleasantly. Potter does not mention the anniversary and they do not talk about the war. Instead, Potter tells Severus about the ward work he's done on Grimmauld Place.

"That's quite the undertaking," Severus says, finishing his beer.

Potter shrugs. "It's not as though I did anything from scratch. But after the war, after... Dumbledore," his voice wavers slightly and Severus must push back the inevitable sadness at Albus's name. "Well, the secret keeping and unplotable spells were diluted to such an extent that I had to re-anchor most of the wards. I dismantled some and rearranged the others." Potter stands, clearing their plates. He sets the dishes to washing with a casual flick of his wand. The elf is nowhere to be seen. "I enjoyed it, though, the magic. It's therapeutic and intricate. Detailed enough that it forced me to concentrate, took my attention off everything else for a while." He sits down again, elbows propped on the table, cheek resting on the curve of his palm.

Severus looks at Potter's fingers, at the line of his forearm. There are three freckles near the crook of his elbow.

"You've been watching me," Potter says, and there's a hint of something in his voice that Severus can't identify.

Severus considers denying it, but he's already been caught. "Yes."

They end up in the library, a bottle of Firewhisky between them. Potter holds up his glass. "To Fred Weasley," he says. "And Remus and Tonks, Colin Creevey, and Lavender Brown." His voice is steady, but Severus sees the dampness in his eyes when he looks at him.

Severus nods and drains his glass, then pours another measure of whisky for himself and Potter. "To Matty Bulstrode," he says, "Simon Winters, Apollo Pendergrass, Viola Smyth, and Abigail Dubois."

“To Cedric.” Potter takes a sip of whisky. His mouth is wet with it when he lowers his glass again. Severus isn’t sure why he does it, but he reaches out, places a hand on the small of his back. He can feel the knobs of his spine, the warmth of his skin beneath his shirt. Potter smiles, though his face is drawn and sad.

“To Alastor,” Severus adds. “To Charity and to Albus.”

“To Albus,” Potter agrees. “That fucking bastard.”

And Severus has to drink to that.

They end up toasting Aberforth and his tunnel. And Longbottom for offing that blasted snake. They toast Minerva and Rubeus and Weasley after Weasley after yet another godforsaken Weasley.

By this point, Severus is feeling pleasantly drunk. Potter refills their glasses yet again, whisky sloshing over on to his hand. He sucks it off. Severus watches his fingers, his lips.

“Anyone else?” Potter curls his feet beneath him and leans back, head resting against Severus’s shoulder.

Severus does not tell him to move. He does not pull away. Instead, he says, “Lucius, that coward.” Severus shakes his head. “Who always manages to land on his feet.”

“And Narcissa,” Potter says softly, adding: “She saved my life.”

Severus refuses to drink to Black, but Potter only laughs. “To my mum then.”

“To Lily.”

The bottle’s more than half empty now and Severus sets his glass down, takes Potter’s from his hand. Potter settles further back against him, and Severus is startled by how comfortable he feels. Perhaps it’s the alcohol. Or the cathartic tribute to the living and the dead. But Severus feels at home here—with Potter’s warm weight beside him—in a way he’s not sure he has before. He thinks he should be surprised. But, at the same time, it makes sense that he and Potter would be drawn together in this way.

“Don’t leave,” Potter says, voice softly slurred. “You said I didn’t have to be alone.”

“Shush. I told you I’d stay. I’m not going anywhere.”

“Good. That’s good. I like you here.”

Potter falls asleep with his head in Severus’s lap. Severus can’t help but run his hand across his head, thread his fingers in his hair. It should feel inappropriate, this intimacy—it’s certainly not something Severus is used to—but it doesn’t. He is no longer Potter’s teacher. They have both lived a lifetime since then. And this, this familiarity, for lack of a better word, feels natural.

Severus wakes to pale light streaming through the window and a painful crick in his neck. Potter is sprawled across his lap, legs splayed, one thrown over the arm of the sofa. Severus rolls his shoulders, back protesting, and Potter sighs, shifts against him. The movement causes a stir of arousal in Severus's stomach, his groin. He closes his eyes, tries to focus on the pain in his shoulder, the ache of his back, and not the press of Potter's head against his morning erection.

He exhales, and Potter moves again with a groan. Severus opens his eyes as Potter stretches, t-shirt riding up to reveal the pale skin of his stomach. The motion accentuates the swell of Potter's cock beneath the fabric of his trousers.

Severus swallows, mouth dry, and looks away. Gently, he pushes Potter off his lap.

Potter sits up, raising his arms up. "Oh," he says, turning back and forth; his spine cracks with a loud pop. "Next time we're sleeping in my bed."

"Next time?"

"Of course. And less Firewhisky too, I think," he adds after a moment.

On that, Severus can agree. His head is throbbing, pain splitting his skull from jaw to temples to eye sockets.

"I think I need a Pepperup." Potter is massaging his temples with his fingers. "I don't drink very often. A beer or two every so often but not like that." He gestures to the coffee table where the bottle of Firewhisky still sits before them. The sight makes Severus's stomach churn. "Last year, though, there was a time when I drank too much. There's a certain appeal, you know? Wanting to lose yourself. To forget everything for a while. But I knew it wasn't good for me. And everything you're running from is still there when you sober up."

"Yes."

Potter is still for a moment. Severus wants to reach out, to touch him. But he does not. "My father was an alcoholic," he says.

Severus has told very few people this. Of the nights Tobias spent drinking at the pub. How he would stumble home pissed out of his mind, smelling of beer and sweat. His father was never a kind man. But when he drank... Severus remembers the outbursts. The anger, the yelling. He never hit his mum. Never raised a hand against her. But those last few years—when he was drunk more often than not—there were times Severus thought physical violence might have been better. At least then he could have fought back. At least then Severus could have protected her.

"He drank himself to death with I was sixteen."

"I'm sorry," Potter says quietly.

"Sometimes, I see myself in him. And I worry—"

Potter reaches out, covers Severus's hand with his own. "We all have bits of our parents inside us. But you are no more your father than I am mine." Potter stands then and Severus misses the warmth, the weight of him at his side instantly.

"Breakfast?"

"Yes."

3 May 1999,

I wanted to kiss you so badly yesterday. And then, when you stayed, I wanted to touch you. It would have felt so good—if you'd let me. Touch you, that is.

HP

I would have.

Yeah?

I didn't want you to think I was only using you because of the anniversary. Or that all I wanted was some quick one off.

There was a time, after the war, when I was trying to forget. Trying not to think. Not to remember. And I did some things I'm not proud of.

I think I hated myself some—for being alive. For coming out of the war relatively unscathed. But those few months passed in a blur. It was so easy, and it felt good for a little while. But it was only a distraction. I know that now. And I'd wake up the next day feeling worse than I had before.

I think there could be something between us—if you'd let there be. But not like that. Not with you.

7 May 1999,

I can't believe I'm asking you this, but I've finally worked up the nerve and I have to know. Do you prefer to top? Or do you bottom?

Potter,

If I didn't know better, I'd think you were propositioning me.

Maybe I am.

Are you implying you'd like me to fuck you?

Holy shit, Snape. Yes. Yes, I am. Will you?

You like to top? Figured as much. I'm pretty open. I love to fuck. It's brilliant. But being fucked? Christ. The way it feels when you come.

I am aware. I am also open to either position.

Oh my god. When? Please tell me you'll fuck me. Or let me fuck you.

10 May 1999,

Do your friends know that you spend all manner of hours writing to me?

No. But they know I'm happier now. And they don't want me moping about all day, anyhow. Hermione's always on to me about finding something to do—something I enjoy.

This hardly counts as a respectable pastime.

Maybe not. But I do other things, you know. I read. Sometimes I cook. I go flying. Occasionally I even revise for my N.E.W.T.s. Besides, social interaction is important. My therapist tells me that every week.

I do not think this is what she intended.

What? Keeping in contact with a former professor? She doesn't know I want to fuck you, of course, but she was pleased when I told her we've been writing.

Besides, it's good I've got something to look forward to.

What do you mean?

When you finally agree to take me out. Seriously, Snape, for someone so intelligent, sometimes you're incredibly obtuse.

Severus runs a hand over his face. He's not sure what to do. The realisation has come upon him gradually, but there's no denying it now. He wants Potter. He's always had a way of getting under Severus's skin, but this... This is clearly something more than that.

In over a year, they've seen each other just the once, but it doesn't matter. He wants Potter as much as he's ever wanted anything.

You're too much of a temptation, he writes. This will end badly. You have to know that.

No, it won't.

Regardless, I ought to know better. I ought to stay away.

Maybe. But that's not what you want.

No.

13 May 1999,

I like it—ward working. I think I could be good at it.

You could pursue your mastery. Charms would suit you.

Do you think Flitwick would write me a recommendation?

Anyone would write you a recommendation.

But yes, Filius would.

SS

15 May 1999,

Why mandrake leaves? I know that, even in the Muggle world, the plant has long been subject of superstition, and of course it has magical properties. But what is it about mandrake, specifically, that facilitates an Animagus transformation?

Perhaps you should be writing to Minerva.

Come on Snape. What fun would that be?

16 May 1999,

Mandrake is known for its hallucinogenic properties. Before your first transformation, the shape of the creature your Animagus form will take appears in your mind. I believe the mandrake helps with this visualization.

SS

And, when you have to add a silver teaspoon of dew from a place 'neither sunlight nor human feet have touched? Do you think I'll need to know a specific place that meets those qualifications? Or is it enough to merely know the requirement?

There are places in the Forbidden Forest. I think that answer will be sufficient.

19 May 1999,

Have you ever had sex with a woman?

HP

No.

Really? Why?

Potter,

Do I actually need to explain this to you? I have never had any desire to have sex with a woman.

Oh. Even when I was pretty sure I was gay, I still wanted to know what it felt like.

A did you enjoy it?

A tad. Cocks are better, though.

Well, there you have it.

23 May 1999

Have you ever been in love? Aside from my mum?

I have. Once.

It's crazy, I know, but it makes me jealous—thinking of you with someone else.

It was a long time ago.

I want to know what it feels like—to be in love.

26 May 1999,

N.E.W.T.s are next week.

You'll do fine.

I know.

1 June 1999,

I want to suck you off, Snape. I was thinking about that today.

You had an exam today.

I know. Potions. Made me think of you.

Severus does not masturbate often. But that night, after reading Potter's letter, after thinking of Potter *thinking of him* while sitting for his exam—*fuck*. He barely makes it to his bed before he has his hand fumbling in his trousers, a wet spot already spreading on the front of his pants. His entire body feels tight and hot, as he lies back against the pillows, trousers pushed down around his thighs. He hardly has to touch himself. He barely closes his fingers around his prick before he's coming, spunk covering his fingers, heart beating wildly in his chest.

11 June 1999,

I did it. I passed my N.E.W.T.s.

Congratulations. Should I notify The Prophet?

No need. I'm pretty sure all scores are public record. They release them to the paper.

Potter is correct. All O.W.L. and N.E.W.T. scores are published in *The Prophet*.

Potter did not merely pass; he excelled. He took five exams and earned an O in every one. Severus would be impressed, had he not known him more than capable.

Celebrate with me? Let's get a drink. We can go anywhere you like. The Leaky, someplace in Muggle London, Hog's Head, Madame Puddifoot's...

There isn't enough whisky in the world to make tea at Madame Puddifoot's palatable. Muggle London is fine.

They meet at a pub in Islington. A local place within walking distance from 12 Grimmauld Place.

Potter is dressed casually in dark jeans and a grey t-shirt. His hair is mussed; there's a shadow of stubble along the sharp angle of his jaw. He looks fantastic. Severus's stomach flips and he looks away, but not before Potter notices. The man's mouth quirks into a half-smile.

"Glad you could make it," Potter says, as if Severus has dozens of other obligations filling his schedule.

They find two seats at the end of the bar. Severus is distinctly aware of Potter beside him. The warmth of his body and the smell of his soap—sandalwood and something else. Sage, perhaps. The man's magic crackles like electricity between them.

"Do you come here often?"

Potter shrugs. "Sometimes."

The barkeep comes to take their order. Potter asks for a cider, Severus whisky.

"I'm glad you're here, you know," Potter says, once the man has walked away.

"Why?"

"Really?" Potter shakes his head. "I'm tired of all the head games, Snape. I think you know by now how I feel about you. And I think you feel the same way."

A young woman comes up the bar, edging in beside Potter to get the barkeep's attention. Her short skirt rides up her thigh as she leans against the counter; it barely covers the curve of her arse. Potter notices. He tilts his head, eyeing her appreciatively before looking back at Severus.

Severus has never been attractive. But, sitting here next to Potter, Severus is all too aware of his physical shortcomings. Potter, with his broad shoulders, ridiculous hair, and skin like milk and honey had turned nearly every head in the pub when they arrived. Severus, in comparison, feels muted and lacking.

The bartender returns with their drinks, glancing between Severus and Potter before moving down the bar to serve another customer. Severus does not need to read the man's mind to know he's wondering what Potter could be doing here with someone like him. Severus isn't sure himself. Potter could have anyone he wants and yet he's electing to spend his time with Severus.

Severus takes a sip of his drink. He tells himself that the warmth in his stomach is from the alcohol and not the proximity of the man sitting beside him. Potter watches him for a long moment then looks away again, at the bottles lining the shelves behind the bar. He traces a finger around the lip of his glass. He takes a sip of his drink; his upper lip is wet. Severus has to look away before he's overcome by the urge to kiss him. *Christ*, what Potter can do to him, how he's managed to throw his entire world off kilter with a few letters and one goddamned glance.

They've barely seen each other. Just the one night at Grimmauld Place a month ago and the increasingly suggestive correspondence via owl. Severus reaches for his glass again; his hand only shakes slightly.

"You want to touch me, don't you?" Potter says then, his voice low, hardly audible over the noise in the pub. "To kiss me."

Potter's thigh brushes against his and Severus's breath catches. He feels his skin heat and he hates himself for it. Hates that Potter is right. That he desperately wants to reach out and touch him, wants to take him back to his bed and suck him off, wants to find out what Potter sounds like when he comes.

"Yes." Severus doesn't recognise his voice; it's raw, breathless.

The barkeep fills two pints for the waitress to take out to a table and comes back to ask if they'd like another round. But Potter only shakes his head, presses his leg more firmly against Severus's. He bends his head, hair falls over his glasses. He brushes it back again. "You should," he says, "touch me, that is."

Severus turns on his stool, looks out over the pub. He needs to calm down, regain his composure, his control—assuming he had some to begin with. There's a couple seated in one of the red-leathered booths; a bottle of wine is open between them. The man leans in, whispers something in his partner's ear that makes her laugh. Four blokes that look about Potter's age, uni students most likely, sit by the door. Their table is littered with empty pint glasses. They cheer obnoxiously when the waitress brings them a round of shots.

Potter's fingers brush along the inside of his thigh and Severus tenses. He feels strung out, wire-taut and, *fuck*, but his cock's already beginning to swell. He finishes his whisky, sets his glass down. Potter's looking at him again, a glint in his eye that makes his pulse race.

Severus exhales unsteadily. He hopes Potter doesn't notice.

"I wanked last night," Potter says softly. "Thinking of you. Hoping you'd finally let me touch you."

"Potter..." Severus says in warning, but his voice sounds strained.

"It's okay, you know," Potter smiles, a soft curve of pink lips, "wanting this." He drags his thumb along the seam of Severus's trousers, hand dangerously close to his prick. His fingers traces tiny circles there. Severus swallows thickly, fully aware that Potter can feel him hardening. The room is suddenly too warm. Potter leans closer.

"Don't..." he says, as Potter's fingers continue to trail against his thigh, just below where he'd like them to touch; his knuckles press into his bollocks. He can feel the barkeep's eyes on them now, and he wonders how far gone he looks, how clearly this desire is written on his face.

"You should come with me," Potter says, standing. He pulls a few bills from his pocket and leaves them on the bar top before turning and winding his way through the tables towards the lavatory.

Severus makes himself count to sixty before following.

Potter is waiting for him outside the loo. The hallway smells of piss and stale beer, overlaid with the cloying scent of disinfectants. He smiles when he sees Severus, pushing himself up off the wall to stand before him. For a moment, he just looks at Severus, green eyes bright behind his glasses. Then he reaches out, tracing the line of Severus's jaw with a thumb. Severus should pull away, he should go back to the bar and order another drink, he should Apparate home, but all he can do is stand transfixed as Potter's thumb sweeps across his lips.

And then Potter is leaning in, pressing his mouth to his. Severus groans into the kiss as Potter's hand curves around the back of his neck, holding him close. Potter's lips are warm and dry; he tastes of cider as his mouth opens against his.

"Been wanting to do this for so long," Potter says, pulling back slightly before leaning in again. He kisses hungrily, fingers twisting in Severus's hair. His tongue licks at Severus's lips, teeth scrape across Severus's jaw. Severus's hand falls to the small of Potter's back, his skin warm beneath the thin fabric of his t-shirt.

He leans in closer, walks Potter towards the wall, and Potter grinds their hips together once, twice, and then again. Severus feels his heart thudding against his ribcage and he's certain he's never felt anything as good as Potter pressed against him—his cock a hard line against his, his fingers gripping his shoulders so hard there'll be bruises. Severus is dizzy with it.

"Fuck, Snape," Potter says, voice a rasp, "if you don't stop I'm going to—" He rocks his hips again and Severus moans, mouth sliding down Potter's throat, to suck at the skin there. The thought of Potter coming in his pants right here in the hallway where anyone could walk by and see them is nearly enough to drive Severus mad.

"Shit."

"I know, right?" Potter pulls away. He's breathless, cheeks flushed, forehead sheened with sweat. But then he grins, and before Severus can stop him, before he can even open his mouth to protest, Potter takes his hand in his and drags him into the toilets.

"Potter, what are you—?" he manages as Potter pulls him into a stall, warding the door behind them with a snap of his fingers. Severus shivers as the magic washes over him. The space is narrow. There's barely room enough to stand together. Severus's shoulder blades are pressed against the dividing wall, as Potter crowds closer to him.

"You said once you like blowjobs." Severus feels Potter's breath hot against his ear. "I can't tell you how much I've wanted to suck you off ever since." Potter reaches between them, cups Severus's erection with his hand; his thumb strokes up and down, shifting the fabric of his trousers, causing Severus to curse, hips thrusting forward into Potter's palm. He thinks he could come from just this. From the press of Potter's hand against his cock.

Potter laughs against him, mouth against his neck. The scars are there, ghastly beneath his collar, but Potter doesn't care.

"It's good, yeah?" Potter says. "I could make you come. I could rub against you until we both pop. But I know you'd rather come in my mouth." He strokes his thumb along the swell of Severus's cock once more; it's straining against his flies, buttons pulling, and then Potter's mouth is on his again as he tugs his trousers open and pushes his hand inside. His fingertips brush against Severus's prick, and Severus groans, head falling back against the stall. His pulse is pounding in his ears, his breathing ragged. If anyone were to come into the toilets now, surely it would be obvious what they're doing.

The thought is more erotic than it has any right to be.

Potter's hand curls around Severus's shaft and he pulls it out, thumb sweeping over the slick curve of cockhead before pressing into the slit.

"Fuck."

Potter smiles, and then he's on his knees in front of him. "*Christ*, I've wanted this," he says, fingers curling loosely around Severus's cock. "Wanted to know what you taste like, what you'd sound like with my mouth on your prick." Then Potter's lips are pressed against his foreskin, tongue sliding around the head. Severus tries not to cry out, not to thrust his hips forward. And Potter puts a hand on his hip, holding him still as he takes him in slowly, lips stretched wide, tongue pressed to the underside of his cock.

Severus's trousers are down around his hips, ruched under his bollocks. "Yes," he says, "*more*." He would be embarrassed by how ragged his voice sounds, that he's not above

begging, but he can't care—not with Potter's mouth on his prick. He shifts on his feet, and Potter's hand slips under Severus's shirt, along the pale skin of his stomach as he pulls back, Severus's cock nearly slipping out of his mouth before he sucks him in again.

Severus is shaking. It's barely been a minute and he's so close to coming. Potter grips Severus's cock, hand slipping down his shaft as his mouth follows. He's sucking harder now, throat working as he swallows.

Severus's cock is throbbing. He watches Potter, mouth wide, lips wet with spit as he bobs his head. He wants to twist his fingers in Potter's dark hair, fuck his cock into Potter's perfect mouth. Potter's other hand slips between own his legs, pressing against the swell of his erection, rubbing. The sight makes Severus gasp. "I'm close," he manages, "*Christ...*" But Potter only swallows around him, mouth tightening on his prick. Severus swears again. He's imagined this moment. Pictured it clearly while lying in bed at night, hand gripping his cock as he stroked himself, hating himself for how quickly he'd come, for how much he wanted Potter.

Severus's stomach is clenched, his muscles tight, as Potter pulls back again, tongue sliding slickly down his shaft. When he sucks him down again, lips hard against his prick, it's too much. "*Fuck*, Potter I'm..." And then he's coming, thighs trembling as his cock pulses again and again. Spunk spills from Potter's mouth as he swallows.

Severus slumps back against the wall, knees weak, body spent. Potter sits back on his heels, fingers trailing down Severus's softening cock. There's a smear of translucent white on Potter's cheek; he wipes it away with the back of his hand.

"Fuck."

"Yeah." Potter stands, leaning in to kiss Severus, sliding his tongue into his mouth so Severus can taste himself on him before he steps back again.

"Do you... Can I?" Severus says, bringing a hand to Potter's hip, trailing a finger along his waistband. Potter shivers against him.

"No. It's okay. I already..." Potter looks down, cheek reddening. "While I was..."

"Fuck," Severus says again. He drags his hand lower, feels the wetness seeping through the front of Potter's trousers.

"Come home with me," Potter says then. "I want... I need you to come home with me."

Severus takes a deep breath. He should say no. He doesn't deserve this. And he knows it will end badly.

"All right."

They Apparate directly to 12 Grimmauld Place. They're barely inside the front door when Potter's pressing Severus against it, kissing him. His mouth, his hands are everywhere.

“You have to...” he says, fingers at Severus’s belt. “I want...” And, *Merlin*, but the edge to Potter’s voice makes Severus’s cock twitch, despite the fact that he’s just come.

The effect Potter has on him is maddening.

Potter’s tongue slides over his lips. His cheeks are still flushed. “Couch, please.” He takes Severus’s hand in his and leads him into the parlour. Then he’s tugging his t-shirt over his head and undoing his flies. Potter hadn’t bothered with a cleaning charm. There’s a damp stain darkening the front of his jeans. Severus wants to press his mouth to it, to know what Potter tastes like. But instead he stands back, watches as Potter pulls his jeans, his pants down.

The man is gorgeous, pale skin illuminated by the light from the moon streaming through the windows. And he’s half-hard, cock thick and stiffened just enough to stand out from his thigh. Potter holds out a hand and, with a whispered spell, a jar comes sailing in from Merlin knows where.

“Here,” he says, holding it out to Severus. “Get me ready.”

Severus leans Potter over the arm of the sofa, runs his hand down the line of his spine. Potter arches into his touch, presses his hips, his arse back against him. The sight is breathtaking. He opens the jar, dips his fingers into the lubricant. “You are sure?” he asks, pleased his voice doesn’t shake.

“You’re kidding, right?” Potter says. “*Fuck*, Snape, just get your fingers in me.”

He slips one finger inside, crooking his knuckle, feeling the heat of Potter’s body around him. “You’re so tight.” He twists his finger and Potter groans, pushing back against him. Severus’s cock is swelling again, hardening to strain against his trousers.

“Yeah, well, it’s been a while, you know?”

Severus works a second finger inside him. It’s all he can do to go slow, sliding them in and out carefully as he stretches Potter open. Potter winces a tad as he turns his wrist, adds a third finger. But Severus stills, and Potter takes a deep breath, shifts his hips, and relaxes around the intrusion. Severus exhales. If he hadn’t already had one orgasm tonight—if Potter hadn’t just sucked him off, he might come from this, from watching his fingers slide in and out of Potter’s arse. He strokes his thumb across the soft skin between Potter’s bollocks and his hole.

Potter groans, tightens around him. “Okay. Now. I’m ready.”

Severus’s hands are shaking as he undoes his belt, tugs his flies open. His cock is heavy in his palm. He smooths his other hand along the curve of Potter’s gorgeous arse. Wills his breathing, his heart rate to calm.

“Do it,” Potter says, voice low. He braces himself, elbows resting against the arm of the sofa.

“One second,” Severus says, slicking himself, sliding his hand up and down his prick. “Almost there.” He positions himself between Potter’s legs, shifting, cockhead pressed to Potter’s hole as he leans over, one hand on Potter’s shoulder as he presses a kiss to Potter’s back, mouth brushing against warm skin. “You’re ready?”

Potter nods, head down, hair falling over his face. “Please.”

Severus exhales, presses into him, the slow stretch of Potter’s body around him exquisite. Potter turns his head, looks back at him with dark eyes. “Yes, more...” He holds Severus’s gaze, expression soft, open, stunned, as he curves his back, pushes back against him, adjusts to the press of Severus’s prick.

Severus moves slowly, sliding in, inch by inch, until he’s fully seated, hips against Potter’s arse. They’re both breathing hard, as Severus begins moving, leaning over, curling his arm around Potter’s waist. Severus can’t think of anything, save Potter’s body clenching around him, of the way they feel together, Potter arching and trembling beneath him. His hand slides down Potter’s back; Potter’s skin is sweaty, flushed, and Potter cries out. “*Fuck, Snape. More.*”

Severus complies, rocking himself into Potter again and again. He can’t help himself, he lets his magic touch Potter’s thoughts for a moment. But Potter only laughs, clenches his arse around Severus again. “*Fuck...* If you don’t believe I want you by now, then I’m not sure what to tell you.” Potter’s voice is raw; he’s breathless and shaking.

Severus kisses Potter between his shoulder blades, presses his cock deeper into him. It’s amazing, and Potter pushes himself back into Severus’s thrusts, the sofa shaking beneath them.

Severus wishes this could last forever, that he could fuck Potter indefinitely. But he’s already close, and Potter is tugging at his prick, stroking himself in time with Severus’s movements. “Potter, *Harry...*” Severus gasps.

“Come,” Potter says. “I want you to come in me.”

Severus bites his lip, feels the rush of pleasure spiralling through him as he trembles with a long, gasping breath. And then he’s coming, cock pulsing inside Potter as he thrusts one last time.

Potter cries out, shaking beneath him, prick spurting as spunk streaks through his fingers and onto the floor.

Severus lets his cock slip from Potter’s arse as he leans over against Potter’s back. His legs are weak, throat dry.

“Wow,” Potter says. “That was...wow.”

They end up sitting side by side, backs against the sofa. Potter’s still naked. Severus’s shirt is wrinkled, his trousers agape.

“You’ll stay tonight, won’t you?” Potter says, leaning his head against Severus’s shoulder.

“Yes. I’ll stay.”

20 June 1999,

I told Minerva I’d return to Hogwarts. That I’ll teach Potions for her next year.

And I was accepted into my mastery programme.

That’s good, then.

Yes, it’s good.

1 July 1999,

Will you come over tomorrow night? Kreacher wants to make a roast.

I’d like to fuck you too. If you do that. If you’ll let me.

I will.

15 July 1999,

When you’re back at school, we can have sex in your office. Put your desk to good use. Have you ever done that before?

Had intercourse on my desk?

Yeah.

Potter,

Who in Circe's name do you think I was fucking in my office?

I don't know. Have you?

No.

I'll be the first then. I'll call you Professor Snape, if you like.

Severus will do.

You should call me Harry. You've had your cock in my arse, after all.

31 July 1999,

Happy Birthday.

Anything particular you'd like to do this evening?

The Leaky? Around 7?

Yes. I won't blow you in the loo again, though. We were nearly caught the last time.

I know. That's part of the fun. Maybe you can rub me off under the table instead? See how fast you can make me come.

Fuck.

8 August 1999,

I think I'm falling in love with you, Snape.

That seems...unwise.

I know, right? But I'm happy now. We're happy. Aren't we?

Yes.

18 August 1999,

How's Hogwarts? Did you miss the dungeons terribly? Is Kevin settling in all right?

Hogwarts is fine. I'll admit, it's nice to be back in my old rooms. Kevin seems to be enjoying the Owlery. Though he misses Bartleby. Perhaps have him come to the castle for a bit?

I'll tell him to stay over tonight. Perhaps I'll pop round, too? Make sure everything's all right with your sleeping arrangements.

26 August 1999,

Potter,

Your owl is distinctive. Once term starts, someone will surely notice if he's always about, making deliveries every bloody hour.

Why don't you just tell them you're madly in love with a former student? You don't have to let on that I wasn't any good at potions.

Yes, because I choose all my lovers based on their potions prowess.

All the better for me. Still, it might do you some good. Humanize you a tad, anyway. And give them some hope. Let them know there's something under those layers of black besides sarcasm, scowls, and smelly potions.

Hope? That I could possibly fall in love? I think that would more likely instil panic.

10 September 1999,

How are the students?

Unremarkable.

Ah, well, they can't all be boy heroes now, can they? And just think of all the detentions you can assign.

You missed it though, didn't you? Teaching.

It's all right. You can admit it. I won't tell anyone.

Yes.

16 September 1999,

Want to go flying this weekend? Or we can duel? I'd like to duel.

Is this another way of asking for sex?

No. I actually want to duel. I like your magic. And I can't remember the last time I was on the Quidditch pitch.

But sex is good too. I bet you've never been sucked off in the Quidditch locker rooms.

No. Are you telling me you have?

Maybe.

Severus knows Potter is there before he's even down the hall. His wards are still intact, but he feels Potter's magic against his as he presses a hand to his office door, lets his spells fall away.

Harry's let himself in to his rooms.

Severus finds him on the sofa, one leg up, knee bent. His bare foot is pressed against the cushion. His glasses are off, folded on the side table, and Potter's got one hand down the front of his joggers.

"My wards?" Severus says, refusing to acknowledge how his body is already starting to respond to the sight of Potter sprawled in front of him.

"They're fine. Good wards you have there."

"I know they're good wards, and yet, here you are."

"I would have Floo'd," Potter says, "but I was already in the castle. I came round to talk to Flitwick about a project we're starting in one of my courses." Potter's hard. Severus can see the outline of his cock where it's pushing against soft cotton. "Thought I'd come see you after. Your wards let me in. I think they like me."

"My wards don't 'like you.' You merely bypass them without so much as a flick of your wand."

Potter shrugs. "You know I'm good at wards." His hand is curled round his cock, stroking gently. "How was your staff meeting?"

"Inspid. Shouldn't you be in class?"

"Not today. It's Tuesday." Severus watches Potter's fist move, watches his knuckles, his prick shifting beneath loose, grey fabric.

"Are you going to wank for me?" he asks. "Or would you prefer I come back later?"

Potter grins, a lazy curve of pink lips. "No. I was waiting. I like it when you watch. I was hoping you'd let me come on you, though," he adds, hand still moving slowly.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. If you don't mind, that is." Potter's cock is leaking; there's a damp stain spreading across the front of his joggers.

Severus wants to put his mouth on it, to suck him through the wet fabric. Instead he takes his robe off, drapes it over the arm of the sofa. Then he undoes his belt, sliding it all the way from his trousers. He coils it into a loop and sets it on the coffee table before sitting down in the chair by the fireplace.

“Fuck,” Potter says, standing, his joggers tented obscenely. He straddles Severus, knees pressed to his thighs, hands pulling at the buttons on Severus’s shirt. His palms are warm as they slide over Severus’s chest. Severus hisses as a thumbnail scrapes over his nipple, and Potter’s other hand drops lower, fingers trailing over the bulge in Severus’s trousers. “Merlin, you’re hot Snape. I’m not going to last long.”

Potter tugs at Severus’s flies, and Severus’s hands meet his, helping to get his trousers undone. Then Potter pushes his hand inside, fingers curling around his cock as he pulls it out. Severus shudders, and Potter leans back, looking down at him, before tugging his waistband down, letting his own prick bob free.

Potter’s cock is gorgeous, swollen and red and framed by dark curls. “Perfect.” Severus’s voice is a rasp.

Potter’s eyes flutter shut as he takes himself in hand, fingers slipping down the length of his shaft.

“That’s it,” Severus says. “Touch yourself for me.”

Potter tugs at his foreskin, stretching it over the tip of his cock, then letting it slide back. He’s leaking more now, and he spreads the wetness over the head, down the shaft before he starts to stroke himself faster, hand moving up and down.

“Oh,” he breathes out, rocking his hips forward, cock sliding through the loop of his fist with every thrust. Severus’s own cock is throbbing. He wraps his hand around it, and Potter groans.

“Yeah, please, Snape. Touch yourself too. I want to see you.”

Potter’s skin is flushed. The pink that stains his cheeks spreads down his throat to the collar of his shirt, and Severus knows he’s close, knows what Potter looks like when he’s about to come.

Potter spreads his legs wider, as far as the chair will allow, and arches his back. He’s got one hand braced on the chair beside Severus’s head, as the other pulls at his cock in quick, sure tugs.

As Severus begins to stroke himself, their fingers, their wrists bump together, and Potter groans. “Shit, *Severus*,” he says, breath hitching. “I can’t...”

Severus speeds up his pace, fingers tightening as he pulls his cock harder, his own breath shallow.

“Yeah, that’s it. That’s it...” Potter bites down on his bottom lip, hand pumping faster, chest heaving. Then he cries out, fingers clenching around his shaft as he comes, spunk streaking onto Severus’s stomach, his prick in thick, white strands.

Severus slicks himself with it, smearing Potter’s come down the length of his shaft, and Potter groans. “Fuck, *fuck*.”

Severus’s stomach muscles are clenched, his bollocks tight. He wants to take Potter by the hips, lift him up, see how quickly he can get his cock up Potter’s arse, how long Potter could ride him before he spills himself inside. He can’t get enough, and he wants, wants...

Potter’s watching, him, eyes wide, lips parted. Severus is close, waves of sensation rolling over him. It’s almost too much.

And then Potter leans in, tongue flicking at the shell of Severus’s ear. “Do it,” he whispers. “On me. I need you to come on me.”

That’s all it takes. He cries out with his orgasm, body taut and shuddering as spunk splatters against Potter’s pale belly, stripes the hem of his t-shirt, drips down onto his prick.

Potter drags a finger through it, sucks it into his mouth. Then he laughs, shaking his head. “Shit, that was hot. Give me ten minutes, and I’ll be able to go again.”

Severus casts a cleaning charm on them both, and Potter leans forward, rests his head against Severus’s chest. Severus threads his fingers through dark hair. “You’re insatiable.”

“I am, but you like me that way. Keeps you young.”

“Perhaps. Still, I think the bed would be best next time.”

19 September 1999,

What do you do for fun at Hogwarts?

When I’m not doing you, you mean?

Good one.

Yes.

I read. I enjoy collecting ingredients in the Forbidden Forest. I brew—it’s nice to have my labs back. Sometimes I have tea with Minerva or Filius. Or go to the Hog’s Head with

Rubeus and Argus.

And?

And?

Come on, Snape. You can say it. And?

And I like to assign detentions.

22 September 1999,

What would you say if I asked you to tie me up?

I would say 'yes.'

SS

“What do you want for dinner?” Potter’s on his stomach by the fire, copy of Walker’s *Advanced Personal Warding and Blood Magic* open in front of him.

“Minerva has requested that I invite you to eat in the Great Hall.”

“Oh?” Harry raises an eyebrow. “Any particular reason? How does she even know I’m here?”

Severus sighs. Presses his fingertips to his temples. “Potter, you send me a dozen owls a week.”

Potter grins. “At least.”

“Yes, and when you’re not incessantly owling me messages too inappropriate to read in front of students or staff, you’re appearing in my rooms at all hours of the night. You’re here far too often for her to think you’re merely dropping round for tea.”

“I suppose that’s true.” Potter doesn’t seem remotely concerned about the revelation.

“Do you think I can sit at the Head Table?”

“Would you prefer sit with your fellow Gryffindors?”

“Best not. Seeing as how I’m sleeping with Head of Slytherin. My loyalties have clearly been compromised.”

“Truly.”

7 October 1999,

Potter,

What is this?

A butt plug?

Well yes, but why did Kevin return with it? And why is it green?

Don’t you like green? You’re a Slytherin. It’s in your blood. Or should I have gotten black?

Green is fine. What do you expect me to do with it?

Well, I was hoping you’d slick it up, insert it in my arse, and then suck me off.

Your last owl arrived while I was in a meeting with Minerva.

Well, if you didn’t want me to respond, you shouldn’t have asked the question. Serves you right.

18 October 1999,

Hermione and Ron asked us to dinner. Friday night.

Or, well, they asked me and they want me to bring my 'significant other.' They know I'm seeing someone. They want to meet you.

I suppose it had to happen eventually.

I know. But think of their faces when we arrive.

They Apparate to an alleyway not far from the restaurant. Potter allowed his friends to select the place on the stipulation that they meet in Muggle London. While he and Potter have been out in Diagon a few times, they've managed to remain discreet, to appear, merely, as former student and teacher catching up over a pint. But this... This, for lack of a better word, is...intentional, and neither he nor Potter fancies winding up on the cover of *The Prophet*.

They walk the few blocks to the restaurant. An Italian place not far from the Camden flat Granger and Weasley share. And, apparently, Weasley's favourite.

Potter takes a deep breath as they approach the door and looks at Severus. "You ready for this?"

"Not bloody likely."

"Well, that makes two of us, then. Let's go."

Granger and Weasley are already there, seated at a table in the back.

"Oi! Harry!" Weasley smiles, looking up from his menu. Then he frowns. "Where's your date? I thought we were finally going to meet this bloke."

Granger is looking at Severus, eyes wide. "Ron..." she says, placing a hand on his shoulder. A flicker of confusion passes over Weasley's face. "Professor Snape," he says. "Wouldn't expect to see you here. Quite the ways from Hogwarts, aren't we?" He forces a laugh. "What are you doing in Camden?"

Severus pulls out Potter's chair.

Harry was right. The expression on his face is worth it.

"Perhaps we should order some drinks," Granger says.

All things considered, the meal passes smoothly.

Weasley regards them as though Severus might start bugging Harry across the table or, alternately, that they'll suddenly jump up and admit it's all some elaborate joke. But Potter is genuinely interested in his Auror training and his commentary on Kingsley, Robards, and some junior Auror named Thaddeus Little clearly distracts Weasley, for the time, from the revelation that his best mate is, apparently fucking Severus Snape.

Granger also makes admirable attempts at conversation. She inquires about Hogwarts. Asks about Potter's classes.

Severus orders pizza. Potter the spag bol. The food is good.

Once their plates are cleared, Potter holds Severus's hand under the table.

Afterward, Potter walks beside Severus as they make their way to the Apparition point. Then, Harry wraps his arms around Severus's waist, presses his mouth to his, and kisses him.

"Thank you," he says after a long moment, pulling away. "Will you come to Grimmauld Place? I think we both deserve a good fuck."

29 October 1999,

Minerva invited me to the Halloween Feast. Said if I come with you, she'd excuse you from chaperon duties.

I like chaperon duty.

I know. But what if, instead of spending your time catching students in flagrante delicto, I let you jerk me off behind the greenhouses?

We can dress up.

Potter,

Why in Merlin's name do you think I'd want to dress up?

How do you feel about drag?

10 November 1999,

Slytherin plays Gryffindor this Saturday. Would you like to join me in the faculty box?

SS

Are you serious? Of course I would. I can wear the Gryffindor scarf Molly made me for my birthday.

You're certain you can control yourself? I know how you feel about Snitches.

Yes, well, they are terribly sexy. But since I won't be flying, I think we'll be okay.

27 November 1999,

Potter,

If you send me one more sex toy...

Well, you do live in a dungeon. You should be prepared.

I'd prefer not explain to Filius why I no longer open the parcels Bartleby delivers to the Great Hall with morning post.

6 December 1999,

Molly's asking if you'll be my plus one for Ron and Hermione's wedding.

The wedding isn't until March.

I know. But she's stressing about place settings. So will you come?

In March?

Yes. I think we've established that the wedding is in March.

And you do not think you might want to take someone else?

Who else would I take? You're my 'significant other,' remember?

14 December 1999,

So there's something I'd like to try...

Not now Potter, please. I'm teaching. Tell me tonight. I'm sure you're planning to Floo over.

You don't even know what I was going to say! Maybe I was going to tell you we should try that new Indian place in Diagon Alley.

Were you?

No.

22 December 1999,

Happy Anniversary!

HP

???

You've forgotten. I can't believe you've forgotten. Even Bartleby remembered. A year ago today, I wrote to you for the first time.

...Happy Anniversary.

23 December 1999,

Will you come to Christmas dinner with me?

Will there be Weasleys?

At least a dozen.

And boy heroes?

The one and only.

I wouldn't miss it.

You love me.

I...do.

End Notes

This work is part of the 2020 Harry Potter Cross Gen Fest. The author will be revealed at the end of August.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!