

The Soulmate

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The Soulmate

by [MiaLyn](#)

Summary

Year 5

The night of the Yule ball, the prince of Slytherin asked the princess of Gryffindor to dance. Rumor had it they hated each other. In truth, Diana barely knew him. She also didn't know he was her soulmate, and that he had been avoiding her ever since she arrived at Hogwarts.

Notes

This is part of a series of one-shots following DC characters in the Harry Potter Settling. No chronological order. Mostly Bruce-centric. Enjoy :)
Many thanks to Jefrince for betaing this!

Chapter 1

Seven Years in Hogwarts

Year 5: The Soulmate

The lights of the ballroom glowed with an eerie softness. Colors from every House had been painted over the room. Most students had gathered in groups of friends, with or without a date. Diana had agreed to go with Napi because he cared little for parties, which suited her purpose. In fact, she would have skipped the whole fuss herself had she not been coaxed by her friends.

‘You should hang out more,’ they said. ‘Have a little fun.’

They missed Steve too, but they were moving on. Diana had a harder time letting go. Steve had been her first friend and her first crush. Her feelings might have grown deeper with time had he not stupidly drawn his wand. His action had ended up with him exiled from the Wizarding world, cursed to forget the three and a half years he had spent in a magical castle surrounded by friends. Hogwarts should have encouraged him to leave his old life behind. Unfortunately, he had been far too stubborn to forget his grudge and used his magic against a muggle. Ludendorff had been indirectly responsible for the death of Steve’s family, but magic shouldn’t have been the answer. Though she knew he had been in the wrong, his departure had broken her heart.

Still, Diana had to admit the décor somehow lifted her spirits. Headmistress Finch probably hired a very skilled crew to design the statues. The enchanted orchestra was playing a soft background melody unknown to her. The large tables had been pushed against the walls to free the floor and were covered with appetizers and sandwich clubs. Everyone had put on their best robes –or suits, as muggle clothing had become the trend in the past few years. Even Napi had traded the traditional wizard robes for a deep brown three-piece with golden embroidery. She had opted for a simple but elegant red dress.

Students unconsciously parted as she made her way across the Great Hall-converted-ballroom. Diana felt the looks of admiration or spite -sometimes both –and heard her nickname *‘Princess of Gryffindor’* whispered. In the middle of her third year, her peers had decided she fitted the perfect Gryffindor profile: brave and determined with old blood and talent. To this date, she still had no idea why they had set her on a pedestal and tried not to care too much.

“First dance, Diana,” Napi told her, bringing her back to the present.

He guided her onto the floor with a sure hand, assumed the position, and waited for the first notes. They easily fell into the music, the familiar pattern of the dance. Her friend led her with a gentle hand and she followed without a second thought.

“Are you alright?” Napi asked. Diana gave him a light smile.

“I’m fine.” They twirled around again. “It’s just that...”

Her voice trailed off. Her friend completed:

“*He* wanted to take you dancing.”

Her smile dimmed. They danced in silence until the song ended. Napi accompanied her to the side while the second flock of students stepped on the floor with growing excitement. No one spared her a second glance this time. Students were proudly remembering the steps learned the past month and were showing off their dates. Charlie and a cute little redhead were giggling as the Scottish man bragged about his exploits. Sameer had vanished somewhere in the room. She spotted other friends and acquaintances having a good time, laughing and dancing.

The evening seemed to turn out well for many. She just wished it had been *better* for her too.

“May I have this dance?”

Diana jumped, startled, and looked up into the cold blue eyes of Bruce Wayne.

The Slytherin stood elegantly in the trendy muggle-like three-piece suit. He was entirely dressed in black, from his dark shoes to his thin gloves. His smirk was firmly set on his face, but there was no warmth in it. A strange feeling tingled in her body as he held her gaze. The faint scent of –something she couldn’t name but found very attractive –came to tickle her nose. Diana did not doubt a second that this fragrance came from Wayne and wondered if he was using a potion or a spell.

He doesn’t need a potion or a spell, a small voice teased her. *He is eye-drawing in his own right.*

His hand was extended, waiting patiently for her reply. Napi shifted by her side, ready to intervene. She almost refused. She was opening her mouth to refuse when-

“Fine,” she spoke, and she immediately cursed herself for not thinking this through.

His eyes flared with emotions she did not recognize. A blink later, it was gone. A spell? She wondered. It wouldn’t make sense. Not here, in plain sight. If it was a spell, she wouldn’t have seen it, right?

She took his offered hand, followed him onto the floor. Tension was building in her chest, blood drumming in her ears. Whispers roused around them and her peers paused in their conversation to watch. The Princess of Gryffindor was dancing with the Prince of Slytherin.

Rumors had them hate each other, when in fact, she had barely ever spoken to him. They never had a reason to exchange at all: he was a year older, neither of them played Quidditch and outside of school, her mother didn’t let her attend official parties. Truthfully, she didn’t know *him*. That didn’t mean she didn’t know *some* things about him. Everyone in the Wizarding world had heard about the tragic tale of his parents murdered by a hit-wizard in

the muggle streets of London. Everyone whispered about how he appeared much more interested in skirts than in studies; and how he could have likely ended in Gryffindor had he not possessed a ruthless side. No one dared to go against the Wayne Heir. His magical powers might be average, but he could cast very nasty spells if provoked. Even *Luthor*, everyone's most hated Slytherin, stayed clear from him.

Perhaps he had cast something upon her. Diana had never found herself so caught up before.

He paused in his steps, allowing her to stand in position. His hand moved on her waist. She kept her head high, never leaving his eyes. Silence reigned for a while and then...

The music started. Violins jumped into action with the melody of a waltz. He was a good dancer, she had to give it to him –the hold was strong, he led firmly but not overwhelmingly. If not for the suspicion that she had just been spellbound, Diana might have enjoyed the moment.

"Are we not going to speak a word this whole time?" she asked eventually, annoyed by his silence. An amused twinkle appeared in his eyes. *Finally a response.*

"You just did, princess."

Diana rolled her eyes, briefly breaking contact.

"Don't call me like that," she muttered.

"Why shouldn't I?" he retorted. His voice sounded suave and smug. Not in a way she liked.

"I am not royalty," she shot back, perhaps harsher than she should.

"If you say so." She glared at him, suddenly wishing she could find a way to smack that smirk off his face. "Did I mention you look beautiful tonight? The color of your dress suits your complexion fairly well."

Diana's warning instincts skyrocketed. He flirted with every girl, but had not approached her so far, not even when she had hit puberty and gained a crowd of new admirers. Why make his move now? And *here* of all places?

"What do you want?" she asked suspiciously.

His smirk grew slightly.

"I'm just enjoying a dance with a lovely girl." His hand tightened slightly on her waist as he added on a lower tone: "You are a mystery I love to contemplate."

Diana wouldn't have felt differently if he'd just announced he had decided to live on the moon. She discreetly sniffed him, smelt nothing odd aside from that distracting fragrance.

"Are you drunk?" she asked anyway.

He tss-ed with mock disappointment.

“Really, princess? That’s the best you can do?”

Diana huffed, annoyed now. If he *was* using a spell, it wasn’t very effective.

“Don’t treat me like I will end up heartbroken from your neglect, Wayne.”

“My, my, who would ever think your mind jumped so quickly to the dating scene?” he leaned forward, his face inches away from hers.

She glared at him again and refused to escape, not even when she could almost feel his breath on her skin. She had never realized how deep and blue his eyes were, piercing through her mind as if searching through her soul. A shiver ran through her body, not due to the cold. Something was wrong with Wayne –skirt chaser he might be, such a bold move was not like him. Not here, in the open, where everyone would see. His girlfriends flaunted his exploits in his name, but he barely touched others in public. She couldn’t remember if anyone had caught him kissing or necking –or doing more –in the corridors. *Why would she even know that?* she wondered before focusing on the present –and more accurately, on Bruce Wayne clearly leaning closer.

“What is wrong with you?” she blurted, dug her fingers in his shoulder and gave him a firm shake.

The Slytherin blinked. He did not lose his smirk, but kept silent and pulled back. He gave no answer for his behavior and before she could ask for further information, the music came to an end. Like an old-fashioned gentleman, he walked her back to Napi and brought her hand to his mouth.

“It was a pleasure, princess,” he said briskly and left at that.

Diana watched as he headed towards the back of the room and was interrupted by Lois Lane, the Ravenclaw Head Girl. They exchanged a few words in low tones, his expression far too serious while hers seemed concerned. Apparently, she wasn’t the only one who had noticed his odd behavior. Arthur Curry, the black sheep of Gryffindor, and the Slytherin Prefect Mera Xebel joined them next. Wayne’s face darkened. His words turned short and angry. Curry shook his head, Xebel frowned and Lane looked frustrated. Soon enough, Clark Kent, the Hufflepuff Prefect approached in turn. The argument broke down as Lane followed Kent, Curry and Xebel left to the floor for the next dance and Wayne was approached by Vicky Vale, the exchange student from Ilvermorny. Wayne snubbed her and departed, an action that surprised Diana. As far as she knew, he never declined an obvious invitation. She was still watching when he turned around, looked straight at her, and smirked again.

Her cheeks flushed in embarrassment and she looked away. Whatever he did was none of her business. When she turned back towards her friend, Napi’s eyes were glinting in amusement.

“What?” she blurted bluntly.

“Nothing,” he replied, but she did not miss the laughter in his tone. She crossed her arms and glared at him. He relented: “Wayne seems to have an interesting effect on you.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“As I said, nothing,” he repeated. Diana narrowed her eyes and crossed her arms. Unfortunately, her intimidation skills didn’t work on Napi. A shame, truly, as she suspected he had sniffed out something and was holding back on her.

“I see.” The coolness of her tone did nothing to deter him. She uncrossed her arms and sighed. They hadn’t been there for over twenty minutes and she felt exhausted already. “I shouldn’t have come tonight. I’m returning to the dorm.”

“You do look tired,” he commented, and concern replaced the previous amusement. “Should I walk you back?”

Diana snorted.

“Please, as if anything will happen to me in Hogwarts.” She patted his chest and added: “Enjoy your evening, you don’t deserve a sulky date.”

She left him without another word, slipping through the crowd towards the nearest exit. The corridors were empty, safe for the armors. A prankster had decorated them with garlands and various Christmas ornaments, but they didn’t seem to mind. If anything, she thought they produced a cheery feeling. Had he still been there, she and Steve would have joked about the silliness, shared a few candies stolen from the kitchen and hidden in the dormitories for peace and quiet. Her heart clenched again and she wondered, not for the first time -why, *why* did he have to go after Ludendorff? Why hadn’t he told her of his plan? Diana bit her lower lip, blinked her teary eyes and forced herself to focus on the present.

Steve had forsaken the magical world, he no longer belonged with them. It had been his choice and his choice alone. Still, it hurt to think he had put his own selfish needs before the rest; his friends had to answer for his actions too, her *mother* had been called in by the Ministry. So many things could have gone wrong had Headmistress Finch not intervened and refused to expel them.

He never thought about us, Napi told her later. He had been allowed to speak with Steve once, just before he was obliterated. *He was just angry that he couldn’t kill that guy and showed no remorse at dragging us down with him. He thought your mother’s name would protect you. Even after four years, he still knew nothing of our world.*

Her feet stopped as she became distracted by something else. There was a shadow shaped like a dog further down the hall. No, she thought as she squinted further, not a shadow. There *was* a dog –a huge dog at that –staring right back at her. A Great Dane with big canines and a long tongue lolling out of his mouth. The dog trotted towards her, moving gracefully for such a big thing, and stopped a few feet away. It stared straight at her, panting loudly for the otherwise quiet corridor.

“Hello?” Diana said awkwardly. Did it belong to a student? Was it lost? Did the Care of Magical Creatures professor adopt another pet and failed to tell anyone? Red eyes glowed softly –a summoning then? Or an illusion? Was someone out to prank her?

The dog shook its head, huffed and turned around. After three steps, it turned its head back to her, as if saying ‘you coming?’.

“Well, it’s not like I have anything else to do,” she muttered, and followed.

The dog barked and suddenly ran off. Diana cursed and followed suit. The beast was fast and silent, crossing the halls with a firm sense of direction. It definitively knew where it was heading. If this was a prank, she promised herself to kick the prankster’s ass. The dog turned at a crossroad and when she reached the intersection, it had vanished. Instead, she spotted a student sprawled on the ground. Face down, hands over his neck and whining in pain. Diana took seconds to recognize him.

“Wayne? Wayne, are you alright?”

Silly question, he didn’t look alright. She glanced around –found no sign of the dog – crouched next to the Slytherin. The little she could see of his face seemed pale and sweaty. His eyes were closed, his mouth opened in a painful sneer. She immediately reached for his forehead.

“*Don’t touch me*,” he growled. His voice sounded strained and shaky. His whole body trembled, as if shaken by a shiver. Diana grimaced.

“Wayne, you need help.”

“Levitation spell. Mrs. Thompkins –still in the infirmary.”

Stupid stubborn boy, she chided inwardly, but complied and pulled her wand. ‘*Windgardium Leviosa*’. His body rose in the air and she directed it through the castle, crossing her fingers that no one would see them on the way. Diana would not be at the receiving end of accusations, especially after dancing with him. He had clearly drunk or ingested something – something strong enough to bring him to his knees. Was that the reason he behaved differently tonight? The uneasy feeling returned and she accelerated her pace.

They reached the infirmary shortly after. True to Wayne’s words, Mrs. Thompkins hadn’t left yet. The nurse first welcomed her with a smile, but when she spotted Bruce floating behind her, she paled drastically.

“Move him to the bed dear,” she instructed. “I’ll be right with him.”

The nurse hurriedly returned to her office and Diana complied. Every bed was empty tonight so no one would witness the scene. Diana doubted anyone would believe her if she told it anyway. She delicately deposited the Slytherin on the nearest bed. Wayne was still shaking in pain. He looked pitiful, she thought. *Vulnerable*.

“It’s going to be alright,” she said and reflexively ran a hand in his hair. Her mother did this gesture when she was sick, and she felt the urge to repeat it for him.

The moment her fingers came in contact with his skin, pain exploded in her body so suddenly her legs flinched and she crumbled on the ground. She felt stabbed in the guts, burned under

her skin. The sensation spread in her chest, her legs, her arms, her neck and her head. Everything felt too much –the light, the sound, the feel of the stony floor, the smell of medicine and –

And everything stopped. Just as sudden as it came, the pain vanished as if it had never existed. Diana slowly got back on her feet, her legs trembling, holding onto the bed for support. Another whimper drew her attention back to the Slytherin. Bruce Wayne met her questioning gaze unflinchingly.

“Told you not to touch me,” he muttered, before his eyes fluttered and he passed out for good.

SYIH

Voices echoed in his ears. Whispers actually, but loud enough to draw him from his sleep. Bruce faked to still be asleep and listened in the conversation.

“I just knew he looked offbeat last night!” a familiar female voice fumed. “I should have told Clark to go to hell and follow him.”

Bits and pieces returned to his memory and he nearly groaned. Whoever got him got him good –the pain in his head was formidable. Thank Merlin Prince was around to help him to the infirmary... Mrs. Thompkins was most likely still working her magic on him...he recognized the smell of the infirmary...someone had come to check on him.

The female voice belonged to Lois Lane. They had met in the Hogwarts Express and had entertained an academic rivalry ever since he beat her in Charms and she beat him in Transfiguration in first year. She would come to check on him only to ensure he was in peak condition for the next exams. Some ridiculous notion of beating him fair and square...

“He would have found a way to hide from you, which would have delayed his arrival at the infirmary,” a second female coolly informed her.

Mera Xebel, his best friend and ally in a house full of snakes. He sensed she was about to speak when he heard a curtain being pushed aside –most likely he had been isolated with enchanted curtains –and another voice popped in.

“He’s still sleeping?”

Arthur –another strong relation he had built since his first year. He was a wildcard, a brawler and a general pain in the ass, but loyal to a fault. The Gryffindor had befriended two Slytherins instead of students from his own House, and his peers never forgave him for that.

“Got your sobering potion, Art?”

“Had to steal it from Mrs. Thompkins. She wouldn’t let me have it.”

“That’s because you spiked the punch with half the alcohol you stole from the kitchen, and drank the other half yourself, stupid Gryff,” Bruce muttered.

His words sounded more like: ‘*A kau u ike de punch ith alf dalco ystom om de kchen n dank ee oeer alf yooself, stup gryff*’, but the message came across. Arthur barked a laugh, Bruce got scolded by the two females for speaking up while still weak. His seat was rearranged so he could face them sitting instead of lying down. Water was brought, they forcefully fed him some obscure meal and only once he was done, they condescended to reply to his question:

“So, what is Mrs. Thompkins’ diagnosis?” he began.

“Screwed up love potion,” Lois announced. “Mrs. Thompkins thoroughly purged you, by the way.”

No wonder his head felt fuzzy. His memories weren’t quite in order either, so he focused on what he could think of now.

“The leads?”

“The usual ones. Luthor, Vale, perhaps even Darkseid... Barbara sent an owl to ask her father to investigate.”

“That wasn’t necessary,” Bruce pointed out, annoyed. If Auror Gordon was told what just happened, then Giovanni Zatara would know too. And if his magical guardian came to hear that he had been nearly poisoned *again*, he would definitively ask him to move out of Hogwarts old enough or not. Bruce would be forced to obey him because the damn man would bring out his trump card - Zatanna, his sister in all but blood, and her puppy eyes.

“It’s the third time since September,” Mera reminded him. “Either someone wants you badly sick or dead-“

Darkseid Arthur coughed half-discreetly.

“-or someone really wants you to fall in love with them.”

“Since you’re both a pain in people’s ass *and* a heartbreaker, it’s hard to figure out which is which,” Lois remarked with a smirk. “It’s a wonder why we are still friends.”

Bruce often wondered the same. Mera continued her report:

“Dick and Barbara are teaming up to corner and interrogate Marcy. She’s always followed Luthor’s orders like a freaking lapdog.” The redhead crossed her arms. “I told you that humiliating him in Dueling was a bad idea, no matter if he sucks at Defense.”

“Barry has gone to infiltrate the girls’ dorm and check Vale’s belongings,” Lois went on. “Clark is helping, even though he’s still very uncomfortable about the whole thing.”

“Uncomfortable going through ladies’ undies or helping out with Bruce?”

“Hard to say,” the Ravenclaw muttered and crossed her arms in turn. “I love that goofball, but he’s so uptight on some things –still hasn’t forgiven you for that kiss by the way.”

“I was three sheets to the wind,” Bruce protested. “I didn’t realize what I was doing!”

“You mean *who* you were doing it with,” Mera slipped in with mirth.

“Moving on,” Arthur imputed. “I got a much more interesting question to ask. Why is it the princess of Gryffindor that brought you to the infirmary?”

Both Mera and Lois stared at Arthur in confusion as Bruce narrowed his eyes. Mrs. Thompkins never would have told them that Diana Prince had carried him there. So how...

“And you know that because-?”

“Overheard her talking to Napi. She looked shaken; you didn’t do anything stupid, did ya?”

Bruce groaned as he suddenly remembered what exactly happened before he passed out. Three full years of keeping out of the girl’s way, and one fucked up love potion came to ruin his efforts. Prince had touched him, briefly, but long enough for his magic to react. And during those few seconds, she had been privy to his thoughts, his pain, and the tie he had desperately worked to avoid had been created. He wondered if Fate was laughing at him.

As if reading his thoughts, Arthur threw his head back and cackled.

“You finally got yourself that soulmate? After everything you did not to –you gotta admit Bruce, it’s really ironic.”

“What are you talking about?” Mera asked with a raised eyebrow.

Bruce really wanted to punch Arthur in the face right now.

“Something that was told in confidence!” he snarled. The Gryffindor merely smirked:

“That confidence flew out of the window when you tattled to Mera.”

“I only hinted that you were interested in her!” Really, those two pinning for each other for over a year had been a painful sight. “And it ended up great for both of you!”

“Wait!” Lois intervened. “You’re telling me Diana Prince is Bruce’s soulmate?” she turned towards Bruce. “And you never told *me*?”

Sometimes, Bruce hated that his friends could be so sharp.

“She’s not my –“ he started to protest.

“Wayne tradition,” Arthur said. “Every blood Wayne is born with a soulmark. Bruce and the princess share one-“ he rolled up his sleeve and showed his elbow, “-right *here*.”

The two girls stared at him. He somehow managed not to flinch under their expecting gaze.

“And you know that because-“ Mera started, paused and rolled her eyes in realization. “Queen’s boys night.”

“Queen’s boys night,” Arthur acknowledged with that same bullshitting smirk. “So many confessions happened then-”

“Once again, we were drunk,” Bruce reminded him, desperate to silence him before he said more. The next time Queen brought muggle drinks to one of his ‘boy’s night’, he would definitively check if the drink contained alcohol or not. “Oliver spoke of his granny’s magical *underpants* right before you spoke of Bernie the blankie.”

Mera immediately looked interested. Lois looked like she had just found the scoop of the century.

“The mighty Arthur Curry had a *blanket* as a child?”

“His dad has pictures,” the Slytherin added helpfully.

“That was low.” The Gryffindor was bulky for his age, and the thought of him hugging a child’s cloth would destroy his image. He pointed accusingly at the Ravenclaw. “If I read one work in the gossip column of your goddamn gazette-“

Lois grinned.

“No mention of soulmates or baby blankets,” she promised, but both boys knew she would commit that information to memory.

“You better,” Bruce growled in one of his rare moments of seriousness.

The others saw a life-bound romance while he saw an endless challenge. Being a Wayne’s soulmate meant sharing his thoughts, his pains, and his burdens in the most intimate way. Whatever he felt, she would feel. The Wayne Curse had nearly driven him mad the first few months –Zana witnessing his pain had been enough –and the last thing he wanted was to drag Diana into his world. He would have to do some research over the year and use every damn trick in his sleeve to stay clear of her. They hadn’t gone through the final ritual yet, so he still had time.

“Still, Diana Prince is your *soulmate*? No wonder why you’ve been avoiding her ever since she came to Hogwarts.”

Someone gasped loudly. It seemed the curtains surrounding Bruce’s bed hadn’t been as soundproof as he thought. Lois immediately pulled the curtain aside and revealed the shocked face of none other than Diana Prince.

Chapter 2

Seven Years in Hogwarts

The Soulmate (Part 2)

Year 2: Sorting Ceremony

The sorting ceremony was halfway through. Bruce and Mera, to kill time, have been betting in which House the new students would be sent. So far, he had a better guessing record with ten against seven. The next candidate was called forward.

“Diana Prince.”

A pretty brown-haired girl walked to the sorting hat with a spring in her step. This one was eager to start, Bruce thought as he watched her settle comfortably on the three legged stool. Before the hat could cover her eyes, he could see them glancing around the room, briefly crossing his gaze and-

His elbow began to itch.

He dismissed the sensation and turned back to face Mera.

“So, which House?”

The redhead hummed. They had to think fast, in case the Sorting Hat made its decision even faster.

“Ravenclaw,” she announced. “She gives me the same vibes as Lois. Eager to learn. You?”

“Gryffindor,” he replied without a hint of hesitation. “I’d say she’s the impulsive kin-”

GRYFFINDOR! The Hat shouted. Bruce shot her his smuggest grin. The hat was removed but the girl’s eyes went straight to the Slytherin table. She was frowning when their gaze met again, and the itching returned, more irritating. He gave her his best winning smile. She rolled her eyes and left the stage. The next student was called and he turned towards Mera to resume their game. His friend though, was staring at him oddly.

“What?” he asked.

“What was that?” she demanded.

“What was what?”

“That. That look, between you two. Something happened, didn’t it?”

The itch hadn’t subsided. He scratched his elbow absentmindedly.

“Nothing happened, Mera. We looked at each other, that’s all.” He grinned: “She’s cute. Maybe she found me irresistible.”

The redhead snorted and turned her attention back to the next student.

“Yeah, right. I’d say Hufflepuff for this one. You?”

The conversation ended there and was soon forgotten. It wasn’t until Bruce went to take a shower that he remembered the incident and realized which part of his body had been itching all night.

Year 5: Gryffindor Common Room

Diana knew she had been distracted lately. Three days after the startling revelation, she could hardly think of anything else. She had suspected her birthmark to be magical. The itch had only occurred since she arrived at Hogwarts, and the magical history of her family was dense enough that she could have found a dozen ways to explain it. She had not expected it to be a soulmark, even less being tied to someone like Bruce Wayne.

Her friends were beginning to worry about her silence, but she couldn’t bring herself to tell them what bothered her. Sameer and Charlie were Half-Bloods, Etta a Muggleborn. Their vision of a soulmark would be distorted by what muggles –and truth be told, some wizards– believed it to be. Nothing was romantic about a soulmark. It only meant that she and Wayne were bound by magic. The closer they were, the more powerful the bind. Should they get intimate, she would end up sharing her thoughts, her feelings, even her magic. And that was not something she was keen on, not after meeting his cold gaze, the morning after the ball, when he realized she had been eavesdropping. Wayne clearly wanted nothing to do with her.

Napi startled her out of her thoughts as he pulled the chair next to her. She had sought refuge in the library, mentioning some essay she hadn’t finished yet, mostly to find some peace of mind. His presence, alone, meant she had not fooled them.

“You pulled the short straw?” she asked wryly. Napi did not blink nor look remotely guilty.

“We are worried,” he replied instead. “You’ve been acting oddly since the ball. Are you alright?”

She sighed, leaned back on her seat. Her homework laid opened on the table, but she knew she would not be able to focus anymore. And she needed to talk to someone. Out of all her friends, Napi was indeed the best choice. Etta was the bubbly friend with a lot of advice but

none truly helpful. Sameer and Charlie would feel uncomfortable at her opening up to them. Napi was far more mature than the rest of them, and a good listener. He was the one she went to when she felt upset about important things. Perhaps he could advise her properly.

“Not here,” she announced, and rolled her parchment.

Her friend got the hint, stood up, and followed her out of the library. They headed outside in spite of the cold. The ground was covered with so much snow that they had to use warming spells to advance further. Diana didn’t intend to hold him back for long. Once they had sufficiently walked away, she finally stopped, Napi stared at her expectantly.

“Do you believe in soulmates?” she bluntly asked.

Napi’s eyebrows raised a few notches. She noted his eyes glanced at her elbow before he spoke again:

“I take it Wayne finally told you?”

She stared at him in bewilderment, her jaw slowly dropping in disbelief.

“You *knew*?”

Her friend remained frustratingly impassive.

“I know a soulmark when I see one,” he admitted. “I wasn’t certain about Wayne. Not until the ball. When you told me you felt his pain when you touched him, I figured it had to be him.”

She remained silent, too stunned to speak. Eventually, she regained her voice and asked:

“Who else-?”

“On our side? No one. I can only assume Wayne told his closest friends.”

Diana groaned, feeling the beginning of a headache.

“He didn’t *tell* me, per se,” she confessed. “I went to the infirmary to see if he was better, and I just...overheard them. Xebel and Curry know, and so does Lane.”

“Kent will know too then,” Napi concluded. He appeared pensive though, not as distraught as she had imagined. His relaxed demeanor annoyed her. They didn’t know Wayne, and yet he showed more approval to that Slytherin than he had with Steve.

“Is that why you never supported Steve and me?” she suddenly inquired. “Because you thought I would prefer my –my so-called *soulmate* to him?”

“Steve would have not made you happy,” he said quietly. “He would never have settled in the wizarding world, and you know it. Your parentage alone will not allow you to leave the magical world, even if you want to.”

“Yeah,” she snorted bitterly. “Because Bruce Wayne is such a better option.”

“At least he is more likely to understand your situation,” Napi pointed out. “Talk to him, Diana. Who knows, perhaps you might discover he is very different from what you think.”

SYIH

“Do you have a moment?”

The sound of Diana Prince’s voice startled Bruce. He spotted the fourth year Gryffindor, her hand tightly gripping the handle of her bag. He was accompanied by Mera and Arthur, heading to the library for an hour study before the next class. The corridor was empty, and he wondered if she had planned this ambush or had just acted in a spur of the moment. They ought to have a serious conversation, but Bruce wasn’t keen on talking to her right now – he still felt a little weak after that potion. Unfortunately, his friends completely ignored his body language.

“See you later man,” Arthur immediately sang before heading forward. Mera gave him a pitying stare before following.

Traitors, he thought, but knew they were right to leave. He also knew they would corner him along with Lois later to demand details, and was not looking forward to that.

Prince looked startled at their easy departure, and a bit at loss. Bruce figured she had expected a fight to occur before earning the privilege of a conversation. His elbow itched in earnest. Resigned to the inevitable, he offered:

“Classroom’s empty over there. We won’t be overheard.”

She hesitated before agreeing, and followed him. It *was* an old classroom, filled with unused chairs and old desks, dust and spider webs. Not many students, or house elves, wandered there, which suited his purpose just fine. Once the door was closed, he cast a *Silencio* followed by a *Colloportus*. It would never replace the impenetrable barrier set by the Room of Requirement, but it would muffle sounds and prevent unwanted visitors to force their way in.

Prince didn’t say a word, watched him do instead. Her eyes trailed over his body before lingering on the wand holder – and his elbow. She redirected her gaze to his eyes.

“How long have you known?” she asked bluntly.

Bruce had to give it to her straight; she came at him for answers and didn’t try to avoid him like he did. He remembered thinking that *of course*, his soulmate *had* to be a Gryffindor; the very antithesis of his own nature. Outrageously bold was not his style. Then again, she might be sneakier than most of her classmates. At least, that was how Arthur described her

occasionally. She had managed to lay low after the Steve Trevor debacle, in spite of them being very close and his case being very public.

“Sorting Ceremony,” he replied. “It itched when our eyes met, kept itching after.”

She pinched her lips together and rolled her sleeve up. Bruce flinched. The matching birthmark was there. He reluctantly rolled his sleeve up to show his own. Prince glared at the mark as if it had personally offended her.

“And were you ever going to tell me?” she asked, letting the sleeve fall back.

Her voice trembled slightly, demanding an honest answer.

“I intend to break the bound,” he replied bluntly. “You would have never known.”

The weight of her judgmental eyes rested upon him, and he anticipated her next words.

“Dabbling with soul magic is not recommended,” she replied dryly.

“Thus the reason why I never told you, and have spent the past three years deep into research. By the end of sixth year, I would have been onto something.” He added before she could speak: “I may act recklessly, but I don’t jump into magical circles without having studied them and anticipated the outcome.”

“And who are you to judge what is best for everyone?” she crossed her arms, challenging him.

“Do you truly want to have a soulbound with me?”

Prince hesitated. She blinked slowly as she met his eye again. He felt she was weaving her way into his soul.

“I don’t know you,” she pointed out. “You didn’t give me a chance to figure you out.”

“People talk a lot about me,” he replied with a smirk. “That should be enough.”

“People talk about me too, and I don’t agree with most of what they say.” She dropped her arms and took a step closer. Bruce suddenly noted that she was taller than he thought; she could meet his eye square, without having to lift her head. She also had beautiful doe eyes. Strange, that he had never noticed before. Then again, he had spent most of his school years avoiding her. “You have friends –or acquaintances –in every House and most of those people are respected, if not well-liked.” He wondered if she was referring to Lois and Kent. *They* were well-liked. Mera was highly respected because of her fairness as a Prefect. Arthur, not so much, but he was a hothead and hadn’t outgrown his brawling tendencies, so no surprises there. “I’ll assume you are not a complete idiot.”

“So many compliments,” he replied with a hint of laughter. “I am flattered.”

“And don’t go haughty on me,” she shot back, raising one eyebrow. “It’s not an attractive trait.”

Bruce bit back another chuckle.

“So am I attractive?”

This time, Prince rolled her eyes.

“Please, you are handsome. You wouldn’t be popular at Hogwarts otherwise.” He opened his mouth to protest a little – there were other reasons why he had some popularity amongst students – when she added: “Why *are* you acting like an idiot? Some deep secret you don’t want to be found?”

“I’m not-“ *hiding anything*, Bruce wanted to say. He *tried* to say it, but the words wouldn’t come out. His elbow started heating up and he reflexively covered his mark.

To his horror, Prince mimicked his gesture, her expression shifting into surprise. *Damnit*, he thought. She had felt it. She had felt his lie, or their bond had warned her of his lie. That was why he didn’t want to be around her. He could not hide from her, could not deceive her.

“What are you hiding?” she asked then. She looked unsure, as if she couldn’t decide whether his ‘secret’ was worse than having a soulmate or just a plain Slytherin thing.

He decided to strike back before she could find out too much.

“I know,” he simply said.

“What?”

“I *know*, Diana. I know about Zeus.” The Gryffindor stared at him, suddenly stiff and wide eyed. He went on calmly: “I know you are his daughter. I know your mother sent you to Hogwarts to hide you from your aunts and uncles. I know what they’ll do, if they realize you exist.”

Zeus had been one of the most powerful Archimage ever known to wizarding history, perhaps on par with Merlin himself. His ability to control elements had been unparalleled, and many bent to his caprices without second thought, out of fear of his infamous tempers. Zeus had been capricious, arrogant, and a demanding man gifted with too much power. He had cared little for politics, for blood purity or exposure, had instead used intimidation to satisfy his personal needs. His enemies were crushed, women were his hobby and while he accumulated debts, none could truly force his hand, for he would kill on a whim and there was nothing the Aurors could do to stop him.

In the end, his own family had turned on him and assassinated him at a great cost. His children had their magic sealed and if they attempted to fight back, were mercilessly hunted down. Higher authorities feared that one would walk in their father’s stead and had turned them into targets. The Olympus coven, that included the remaining living family of Zeus, had been created to keep a close eye on his lineage.

His visions had led him to understand Diana Prince was the daughter of such a man. By exposing his knowledge, he had just plainly stated that he could ruin her life anytime.

“Who are you?” she asked, pale and slightly shaking.

Bruce could feel her fear through their mark, and grimaced. Fear was not what he was after. Fear was a motivator of many mistakes, and he just wanted her to stay away, not *run* away from him.

“I know your secret, but I won’t say a thing. I don’t want that soulbound any more than you do. Can’t we just leave it at that and move on with our respective lives?” he snapped. Had he gone too far? Diana Prince’s mother was a force of nature of her own, he did not need her to meddle with his affairs, should the girl report him to her.

For a moment, she said nothing. Her eyes kept seeking his, attentive and inquisitive, gauging if he could be trusted. Eventually, she asked:

“Did you tell any of your friends about my father?”

He shook his head.

“They know we are soulmates, nothing else.” He smirked at her, but there was no humor to it. “Better that than the rest, don’t you think?”

Prince shook her head. Her fists were still tight and trembling. When she refused to meet his eye, he knew he had done something very wrong. She wasn’t angry or confused. Now, she was afraid of him.

“You are right, I want nothing to do with you,” she said quietly. “Tell me when you find a way to break this bound. I’ll be looking on my end.”

And upon these words, she cancelled the spells on the door and walked out of the room, faster than he expected.

SYIH

For two weeks, Bruce felt in thunderous mood. He couldn’t focus on his homework, didn’t want to hang out with his friends. He snapped and growled and glared until even professors gave him a wide girth when he passed by them. He got into a fight with Mera, earned himself a black eye from Arthur, and got the cold shoulder from Lois. And in the end, he felt he couldn’t care less.

His conversation with Prince still weighted on his mind. He wasn’t happy with the outcome, loathed himself for using her greatest fear against her. His social skills had never been the best, but this could only be qualified as a massive screw up. And now, he was venting his frustration on the people closest to him. His parents wouldn’t be proud of him, but he didn’t know how to get out of his tumultuous state of mind.

It was, surprisingly, Kent who approached him first. The Hufflepuff prefect found him in one of his hideouts, most likely told by Lois, and cornered him.

“You. Follow me. Now,” he ordered. “We are taking a stroll.”

“Why, you’re hitting on me now?”

The Hufflepuff ignored him and crossed his arms. Apparently, he got over the drunken kiss. Shame, Bruce would have enjoyed milking the embarrassment from that memory a bit more.

“You can either follow me, or I can force you to follow me. The choice is yours.”

All that Bruce wanted was to tell him to piss off. He was angry and lost at the same time and he had pushed people enough. He didn’t need to make any more enemies.

“Leave me alone,” he grunted.

“You made Lois cry,” Kent snapped. “So either we are having a heart-to-heart, either I am punching sense back into that thick skull of yours. And I’ll get Arthur to help me.”

Bruce winced at hearing the bit about Lois. Of all his friends, she had been the only one to match his temper when he got in a mood, and force him to face his mistakes. Had she not been there for him, he knew they would have never been able to prove Professor Karddeis’s – better known now as Darkseid -meddling with Dark Arts. Upon their first meeting, she had called herself an army brat. To have her actually shed tears-

“Fine. Lead the way.”

Kent’s location was the Room of Requirement. When he managed to conjure it, Bruce had to admit he was impressed. The Hufflepuff had only seen him open the door once. Perhaps he had asked the others for pointers, but he was definitively smart to pick that place. It was, after all, a bit chilly outside. This time, the Room had arranged into a cozy living-room, with worn couches, light walls, and a big table made of wood. Kent would feel comfortable in this environment, Bruce thought as he inspected the furniture. It looked like the inside of a countryside house. If his memory served him well, Kent’s parents use to be farmers.

“Sit now,” the Hufflepuff ordered, pointing at a couch. “And talk.”

Bruce complied and replied sarcastically:

“What about, *Dr. Phil*?”

Kent sat opposed him, leant his elbows on his knees, his fingers intertwined.

“You’re angry. Why?”

“Well, I am forced to sit and talk about my feelings against my will, for starters-“

“Stop *fucking* around Bruce!”

The Slytherin paused and truly looked at Kent. His eyes were burning, his fists so tight his knuckles were white. For all the years Bruce had known him, he had never seen him so angry. Not even after Bruce had revealed he was a legilimens at Queen's boy's night. He had earned the silent treatment for a few months, but never blunt ire.

"You are not a stupid guy," he went on. "You're a Slytherin, but the kind of Slytherin that people respect. And it's killing me to see you kicking everyone to the curve because you've got some unsolved issues." He admitted, more in control of himself: "*I* respect you, even if I don't like you. So we are dealing with this now before you lose people who actually care about you."

The words, as well as Kent's genuine concern, stunned him into silence. He and the Hufflepuff weren't friends, in spite of his repetitive attempts. And yet, here he sat, facing him with nothing but his own sincerity. For a moment, Bruce envied him. Kent had an ability that allowed him to read into people's mind, while he dreamed of past and future events. He was, in a way, freer than him. He didn't have to bear the Wayne curse, the kind that guilt him into action, should he dream of some nefarious scheme.

Perhaps he really needed to talk to someone outside his usual circle. Perhaps Kent could help him find some perspective, or give him the scolding he deserved. He was tired of snapping at everyone. And even he couldn't keep going on alone.

"Prince wants to cut the soulbound," he blurted bluntly.

"What's the problem with that?" Kent inquired, slightly puzzled. "Isn't that what you are after too?"

Yes, that was his original goal. And yet-

"She was protesting at first, so I scared her," he admitted. "I used a secret against her. I didn't think she'd freak out that badly."

"Sounds like you didn't think at all," Kent deduced sarcastically. "Must have been some kind of secret."

Bruce snorted and stared at the floor.

"You have no idea."

Finally, the Hufflepuff caught the seriousness of his tone and narrowed his eyes.

"I suppose you can't tell me about it?"

The Slytherin shook his head. Learning secrets was one thing, but spilling them was another. And he would never let this one run free.

"It's the kind of thing that would put her in danger –mortal danger. People wouldn't kill her, but close enough, if they knew."

"And so you used that secret to convince her that being your soulmate is a bad idea?"

Bruce sighed, leaned back against the couch. He had to admit they were comfy, perfect to relax, but he couldn't. His guilt was eating at him –he never wanted to see that frightful expression on anyone's face again, not when they were looking at *him*.

"I don't know anymore."

"I take it you are regretting considering breaking the bound without consulting her first?"

He sharply stared at the Hufflepuff –and remained silent. He truly was uncertain. Prince had genuinely sounded upset that he hadn't come to her.

"You should apologize," Kent said eventually. "From what you said, you didn't actually talk to her at all for years. You don't know her. And she doesn't know you." He paused a moment before adding: "After Queen's night, I did some research about soulmates. It is clearly said that a soulmate isn't necessarily romantic. You can be friends. Close friends."

Bruce raised an eyebrow and replied sarcastically:

"Gee thanks, I never thought of that."

Kent breathed in deeply and went on:

"Back in third year, you went against a Dark Wizard. Professor Karddeis had been teaching DADA for years. He had the other professors' trust, and was secretly protected by Minister Luthor. Lois, Mera, Arthur –they all believed you when you told them what he was planning. You managed to convince Victor Stone to give up following him and serve as an inside man." He paused again. "You helped me get away from Luthor too."

"Killing two birds in one stone," he pointed out. "If I discredited Luthor, then Darkseid didn't have the political support to back him anymore."

"And your friends' lives are in danger because you made yourself a powerful enemy. Why is Diana Prince any different? She's your soulmate, sure, but that doesn't put her in more danger than the others. They would all gladly lay their lives for you, as they had proven before, because they know you would do the exact same thing for them." He paused again. "You inspire loyalty, Wayne. Give yourself a chance with her. At best, she can become another trustworthy ally. At worse, she won't ever talk to you again."

"I guess I can't screw up more than I already did," Bruce admitted. Prince had the same kind of discourse, when she had confronted him. He hadn't given her a chance, hadn't given himself a chance. Perhaps he should let down that damn pride of his and consider opening up to her, even a little. After all, they were soulmates. Magic couldn't have marked them without a reason. "Thanks Clark."

The Hufflepuff startled at the use of his first name. Still, he knew a Slytherin kind of apology when he heard one.

"You're welcome, Bruce. Now, apologize to everyone, talk to Prince, and don't mess up again."

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

My beta got back to me :3

Thus, here is the third part of Soulmate. The 4th and final part will be updated this weekend :)

Seven Years in Hogwarts

The Soulmate (Part 3)

Diana had not had a full night sleep in a week. Worrying about Bruce Wayne and his knowledge of her secret put her on edge. *No one* was supposed to know. Her mother had even sent her to Hogwarts to ensure her existence would be kept from them. How did *he* get wind of it? How did the Prince of Slytherin, who appeared so harmless a few days before, could become one of the most threatening being in her existence?

The first few days, she thought he would come and reveal his real intentions. Her mark itched at times, revealing his presence nearby. Yet, she never saw him. She came across his friends occasionally, and as Curry was a Gryffindor, she could not avoid him. But they never approached her, even though she could feel their eyes on her. After a while, she started believing that he meant his words –that he truly wanted to break their soulbond, and have nothing to do with her. If that meant she wouldn't have to see his face again, then she'd sign for it.

She was slowly beginning to recover from her tired state when the dog appeared again.

At first, it was just a flickering shadow in a corner of the room. She barely paid attention to it, didn't even recognize it. But then, its presence became more noticeable when it came up to her.

It happened a Wednesday afternoon, when she and Etta were working on a project in the library. The dog, the exact same dog than the Yule ball, just trotted up to their table and sat by her side, its red eyes expectantly set on her. Diana stared back at it.

“What are you doing?” she whispered. The dog's tail wagged and its tongue lolled out of its mouth. The scene was very odd as it didn't make a sound. “This is a library, you're not supposed to be here.”

The dog licked its hackles, lowering its head as if ashamed. Then, it stood and trotted away. Diana watched, bemused, as it gave her one last pitiful stare before walking out of the library. When she returned her attention to her books, Etta was staring at her.

“Who were you talking to?” she asked warily.

“The dog,” she replied. “It was just there, you didn’t see it?”

Her friend stared at the empty spot and back at her, confused.

“I haven’t seen a dog. You’re sure you’re okay?”

It was Diana’s time to frown.

“A black Great Dane with red eyes. You really haven’t-” when she saw her friend becoming even more confused, Diana let it go. “Never mind. I haven’t been sleeping well lately. It was probably just a trick of my imagination.”

Etta did not look appeased.

“Next time you see it, show me, okay?” she said. Diana shrugged.

“Okay, sure.”

She would get some well-needed rest. Perhaps it would go away then.

The dog appeared again during the evening, staying at a safe distance. It stared at her while she ate at the Gryffindor table, and followed her back to the Gryffindor Tower. To her relief, it remained outside the Fat Lady’s portrait. But it was still there the next morning.

“You really can’t see it?” she asked Etta once again. Her friend shook her head, still squinting in the direction of the dog which was currently sniffing the walls.

“I hope it’s not the Grim,” Etta mumbled uneasily. “I don’t trust Divination, but Professor Faust gives me the creeps with his predictions. And I don’t want you to die anytime soon.”

The dog had led her to Wayne the last time. She didn’t know where it would bring her next. She chose to ignore it for the time being. Insofar, it didn’t disturb her day and it only stared at her.

The situation lasted two more days before she gave up. She waited until she was alone to face the dog and address him directly:

“You want me to follow you? Fine. Show me.”

The dog wagged its tail happily as it turned around and started trotting down the corridor. It didn’t run this time, letting her walk at her own pace and not draw suspicions from her fellow schoolmates. It led her in a side corridor filled with empty classrooms, stopped in front of a door and scratched it with its paws. Diana breathed in deeply, turned the handle and pushed.

And inside, of course, someone was waiting for her. Her whole body tensed and for a moment, she was tempted to slam the door shut, leave and never return.

“Will you come in please?” Bruce Wayne requested quietly.

The dog was sitting at his side, panting heavily, still looking at her. If it could emit sounds, Diana was sure it would be whining.

“It’s yours?” she asked.

Wayne smiled a little and scratched the dog’s head. Unlike her, his hand seemed to make physical contact.

“Ace is a summoning; kind of like a Patronus, but without the flashy lights. It’s a family charm.” The dog’s tail wriggled as he petted it. “Useful when you want to follow someone around.” He paused and grimaced. “Or call for help.”

So the night of the ball hadn’t been a fluke. The dog had truly been out to draw her –or anyone –back to him. Diana stared at the summoning again, and wondered:

“It has a name?”

“I can’t just call him ‘dog’ all the time,” he pointed out. “He actually responds to it.” The dog –Ace –actually tilted its head on the side. The tail kept wagging enthusiastically. “Prince, will you come in?”

Diana took a step in before realizing she had lowered her guard again. She finally closed the door but slipped her hand in her pocket, where she could wrap her fingers around her wand. Wayne showed no sign of attacking whatsoever, but one never knew with a Slytherin.

“What do you want?” she asked again.

“Talk, that’s it, I swear.” He paused, closed his eyes, breathed in and added: “Please?”

She pressed her lips together, instincts still on full alert. In the end, she figured she might get over with it and let him speak. The faster he’d tell his piece, the faster she’d be able to leave.

“I’m listening.”

Wayne shifted on his feet. Even without their bond, she could sense his nervousness.

“I’m sorry.” Diana waited. He went on: “It occurred to me that I probably should have handled things differently, last time.” She narrowed her eyes, didn’t pip a word. He stared at the floor and added: “It was unfair to keep you in the dark. It was unfair of me to use your greatest fear as leverage.” This time, she felt anger pulsing through her veins. Damn right he had no right! She thought and was about to snap something –anything –when he hurried on: “I know your most well-guarded secret, so I’ll tell you mine.”

Diana opened her mouth to say that she was not interested, that she wanted nothing to do with this –but something in his demeanor made her pause. Perhaps it was the clearly

uncomfortable look on his face, or Ace suddenly vanishing, leaving him to stand on his own. When Wayne spoke again, he sounded oddly...tired.

“The Wayne family has a particularity. It’s called Foresight. I inherited it from my father.” He paused, went on slower: “I dream of the future. Not like a prophecy, mind you, but I can foresee small and bigger events and remember them when I wake up. As the future is always changeable, I can act before what I see happens.” He paused. “Or choose not to act, let things happen and anticipate the consequences.”

She remained silent, this time stunned. To be able to predict the future was an extraordinary skill, if not exceedingly rare. Those wizards usually kept to themselves to be left alone, and their accuracy varied depending on their magic power. From what she knew, Wayne wasn’t a powerful wizard in terms of strength; but if the last few days had taught her anything, she shouldn’t judge his prowess based solely on rumors. No wonder why he kept this veil of mystery around him, if anyone found out about his abilities, he would never be left in peace.

“So you can really see the future?” she asked, and waited to feel their bond contradicting his words. When he confirmed and she felt nothing, she added: “Is that how you found out about my lineage? You saw a futuristic vision or something?”

He shook his head.

“I can dream of the past too,” he revealed. “As the past is written in stone, I can witness one particular moment if I have enough information on the timeline, or if I wonder hard enough about something. Can’t do that with the future, because it shifts all the time, and to be honest, I don’t try to seek through the past too often, it’s magically draining.” He paused again and admitted: “I dreamed of the moment your mother told you the truth about your lineage. You were –eight, nine maybe? You were wondering why the main branch of your mother’s coven was relocating in England, because-“ he frowned, as if trying to remember something. “Your homeland, Themakira, I think? You were missing your homeland.”

Diana watched him uneasily, because she knew now that he was telling the truth. Only three people knew what had happened during that conversation, her aunt, her mother, and herself. And neither Hippolyta nor Antiope Prince would disclose such private information to anyone, even amongst her family.

“I dreamed about it back in September, I was wondering what kind of person you were. I didn’t mean to intrude,” he went on, almost apologetically. “My visions only started last year, I’m still trying to figure out how they work.”

“And you can’t ask your-” she wanted to say ‘parents’ before remembering that he had no more parents and quickly completed with: “an aunt or an uncle? Someone must know something.”

He stared at her with a bitter smile.

“My guardian was a close confidant of my parents, and even he didn’t know about these skills. He learned it through a letter left by my father in his will. I have no relatives on the Wayne side, and I am certainly not going to take a leap of faith and ask a professor for help.

Arthur, Mera and Lois know, but only because I had a vision in front of them one afternoon. They've been helping me deal with them since. But you are the only one I've ever told willingly."

She ought to have felt something. Grateful? Flattered? He trusted her with one of his deepest secrets, she should show some appreciation for the risk he was taking. Or should she really? She didn't owe him anything.

"And *why* are you telling me this?" she growled quietly.

"So we are even. And," he paused. "I don't want you to be afraid of me."

The simmering anger suddenly flared –afraid? *afraid*? Had he no idea how terrified she was that the Olympus coven would find her? The consequences for her mother? For the people she knew? And yet he had gambled on that fear –for what? So she could leave him alone? She watched him wince and reach for his elbow. The simple gesture surprised her –until now, he had not made any move to openly acknowledge their bond, except if she pressured him into it.

"You want me not to be afraid of you. But how can I trust you?" she forgot her wariness, took a step forward and closed the distance between them. She glared into those deep, beautiful blue eyes and went on: "You just dumped your secret on me, and everything is solved? I'll remind you that *you* hinted that you would ruin me if I spoke of the soulmate matter again."

"And I'm really sorry about that! Intimidation never was my favorite way to get the things I wanted, my guardian raised me better than that," Wayne protested. He looked away briefly, then forced his gaze back on her. "And I don't want us to be strangers."

Diana snorted. All this mess, for what?

"Such a change of heart!" she said sarcastically. "So what now, we become best friends?"

"Mera's my best friend, that's a spot even you can't replace," he corrected before turning serious: "I know you didn't ask for any of this. If you choose not to talk to me anymore, it's fine, I brought it on myself. But believe one thing; I will never, ever betray you." He hesitated and added: "I swear it on my family's name."

And right then, Diana hated him. She hated him because he was sincere. She felt it through the soulmark, his genuine want to make up, his promise to keep her secret, because after all, they were bound by magic. And he had given her a serious leverage right there, right now, and she couldn't order her thoughts properly. She needed time alone.

"I'll think about it. Don't come after me. If I want to talk, I'll go to you."

He watched her intensely and once again, she felt the weight of those blue eyes on her. Their respective secret was in the open, they only had to come to terms with each other now.

"Fair enough. Whenever you're ready, just give me a sign," he said eventually. "I'll come as quickly as I can."

SYIH

Four days had passed. Bruce was still waiting.

“No news?” Mera asked.

He had made the first step and apologized to his friends. First to Lois –else Clark would have his head, next to Arthur and Mera. They had forgiven him under the condition that he explained exactly why he had acted the way he did. Without getting into details, he told them about the discussion he had with Diana. Now, even Dick and Barbara knew about his soulmate. They had all agreed he deserved her cold shoulder for a while, and resumed their friendship as if nothing had happened.

Well, except their growing curiosity about his relationship with Diana.

“Nope,” he muttered, eyeing his plate mournfully.

“You think she’s making you wait?”

“No idea.” He glanced at her. “Can’t you drop the matter?”

“You treated everyone like dirt for a week. This is revenge.”

He rolled his eyes, stared back at his food. The dinner made by the House Elves was amazing, as usual. But he wasn’t really hungry this evening. His enthusiasm lowered when the necklace he was wearing underneath his shirt warmed up. Since the one who had slipped him the messed up love potion still hadn’t been found, he had gotten used to carry a trinket that would heat up in the presence of tainted food or liquid. It seemed that the culprit was trying to strike again. As if he didn’t have enough trouble with the soulmate situation already.

“Are you about to do something stupid?” Mera suddenly asked.

“What?” he blurted, caught off guard.

“I know that look of yours,” she narrowed her eyes suspiciously. “What are you up to?”

He rolled his eyes, pushed his glass away from his plate. He would ask Alfred to prepare his meals starting tomorrow. At least his own House Elf wouldn’t poison him.

“Nothing much. I’m going to bed.” He stood from the table, left his seat. “See you tomorrow.”

He felt her unwavering stare on him till he disappeared from the Great Hall. No doubt she would blackmail Queen into checking on him during the night. He’d have to put a silencing spell on his curtains. No one had returned to the dorm yet, so he just went to bed and began to think. Dealing with both his soulmate and the still looming poisoner was growing on his

nerves. He didn't want to snap at his friends again. Being so out of control was unlike him, and these two cases he had little control over.

Unless...

He rolled on his side, pulled the drawer of his nightstand. An empty vial was carefully tucked in a towel. He grabbed it, brought it to his eye level, and analyzed it carefully.

Two weeks ago, Slytherin Common Room.

"Hey Wayne," Queen announced, passing by the two couches he and Mera were occupying. "There's a third year Hufflepuff who's asking for you."

Bruce immediately left his chair and headed to the entrance. As he expected, Barry Allen was nervously fidgeting on his feet, waiting in the cool dungeons. His expression brightened when he saw him arrive.

"I found it," he whispered immediately. "What you were looking for. I found it in Va- in her drawer."

His right hand was playing with an empty vial. He gave it to Bruce, looking expectantly.

"You think it proves anything? You think she's the one who tried to slip you that love potion?"

"If you easily retrieved it, then it could have been easily implanted too," the Slytherin remarked. He didn't see a trace of a brand or anything remarkable. It was hardly surprising; love potions were banned from the market. "Thanks Barry. I appreciate what you did."

"Anytime," he replied cheerfully before turning serious. "I don't like it when people try to hurt my friends. I don't have many that can keep up like you do. Take care."

Before Bruce could reply, he gave him a small salute and vanished from view. The Slytherin stared at the empty spot before him, wondering if teaching the kid the speeding spell had been a good idea after all. He reported his attention on the vial, twirled it in his fingers.

"Well," he muttered. "Let's see what I can get out of you."

Back to present

He didn't have enough contacts in the black market to make a safe inquiry. John Constantine did not count. Bruce wouldn't trust the man as far as he could throw him.

"Time for plan B," he muttered to himself.

As he had told Diana, if he needed to find out an occurrence of the past, foresight was the very last resort. He would usually lie on his back, close his eyes, focus on the date and the event and somehow fall into deep slumber. His consciousness would carry him to the moment he was looking for, and he would witness a scene through someone's eyes. In the case of his messed up love potion however, he had no timeline. He could guess, at best, that

the potion had been bought a week or two before the school year began. His first poisoning had occurred in September. He hadn't paid too much attention back then, blaming an unhappy stomach, but now he thought it could have just been a beta test. The Yule Ball had been the worse and he didn't want to wait and see how far his poisoner was ready to go.

Perhaps I can still play this off, he thought as he lay on his back again, fingers toying with the empty vial. He didn't have a date, but he had the object. This wasn't something he had tried yet, although he thought Alfred might have mentioned something about his father using tools to help him direct his foresight and find what he needed. In this case, he just needed to find out who had bought it. *Okay, let's see what we can do.*

He settled comfortably, closed his eyes, and made sure he was firmly holding the vial. He breathed in and out, slowly, gently, focused on the item and on one single question: *who brought you to Hogwarts?*

It didn't take immediately. His mind was constantly slipping onto other matters and he had to renew his attempt a few times. Still, after a few minutes, he felt the telling sensation that *he was slipping out of his body. His mind travelled through time like a particle of dust dancing in the wind, only to settle on the edge of a window. He didn't recognize the place at first, and it wasn't until he saw the woman standing inside the room that he realized where he was.*

The Mooney's Nightclub. An exclusive building reserved to pureblood witches and wizards, where unsavory deals occurred behind the stage. If one spoke to the right person, and brought the right amount of money, one could get their hands on anything they wanted. The owner, Fish Mooney, was currently facing another person, wrapped in an ostentatious cape. Bruce forced his mind forward and crossed the window. He was shoved into Mooney's mind, and while he had no access to her thoughts and feelings, he could still hear and see.

"I'm serious," the person –her customer –said. "I need something lethal. But something that can be passed off as an accident."

A female was speaking, quite hurriedly at that. The hood of the cape hid her features, but couldn't disguise the youth of her voice, or her nervousness. This must be her first time making inquiries about purchasing something illegal.

"Who are you intending to kill?" Mooney asked with her slow, sultry voice. Her left hand brought the cigarette to her mouth. She inhaled and exhaled slowly. Bruce knew she smoked a particular brand of weed, one that smelt odd enough to destabilize the customer. The current one started pacing, clearly uncomfortable.

"A rival. Someone who deserves to pay for the humiliations he makes Lu- I mean my friend – suffer all the time. I want him dead. But I don't want people to think my friend –or anyone related to him –did it. It wouldn't do if people suspected us."

The woman barked a mocking laugh.

"Petty child," she said with a sharp smirk. "You know nothing of the world."

"I'm not here to buy your sarcasm, I'm here because someone told me you could provide me with what I was looking for." She pulled her bag and shook it, letting the owner hear the tingling coins inside. "A hundred galleons. That's how much I'm ready to spend."

Mooney laughed again.

"I'm not selling you anything deadly, silly girl," she said. A wave of her fingers and the bag vanished. The hooded figure stiffened and reared back angrily. "You deserve nothing more but this."

Another snap of the fingers and a vial appeared, suspended in thin air.

"It's a love potion that turned wrong," she told her. "It works, but after an hour or so, the body will reject the effect. Hardly lethal, but it guarantees great discomfort for whoever drinks it."

"That is not what I asked for!" the girl –because the high-pitched protect could only belong to a young woman –protested. "I want him to die!"

Mooney laughed again.

"Take it or leave it, Miss Graves. But a transaction has been made; you won't be getting back these galleons anytime soon."

The scene suddenly shifted and Bruce was brutally yanked out of the scene. He opened his eyes, gasped for air –but his lungs burned and his body was sweaty and his vision was distorted and he couldn't breathe –couldn't breathe –couldn't br-

A red room, bare. A girl in the uniform of Hogwarts chained by the hands to the farthest wall. Dark hair falling over her face. Barely breathing. Heavy footsteps in the afar. Triumphant footsteps. The girl didn't move. Two people entered the room. A tall woman with blonde hair. A tall man with short dark hair.

"Was this necessary?" the man asked, slightly uneasy. The woman huffed and pulled her wand.

"Once her power is sealed, she will be released."

The woman stepped closer, pointed and the girl lifted her head. Her eyes had taken a golden hue. Sparkle of electricity seemed to appear in her hands, travelled down her arms, her body. She screamed before the spell was even cast and something like a lightning bolt stroke out of her body.

New screams echoed in the room, and something new was burning, and there was smoke and a different scent and more red splattering on the walls and the ground and he heard himself scream too because he was at fault he was supposed to protect her he wasn't supposed to let them get their hands on her he should have avoided it and he knew she would never forgive him for failing and it hurt hurt hurt because it was his fault his fault alone and-

...and...

“BRUCE WAKE UP!”

Chapter 4

The Soulmate

Part 4

When Bruce opened his eyes, he was staring at the infirmary ceiling, again. He felt the slightest traces of a ward surrounding him, the smell of burned willow, and absolute silence. *An intensive care ward*, he thought. He really must have outdone himself last night; he felt exhausted, his body could barely move and his thoughts felt scrambled. Not being in control was something he hated, but he took comfort in the knowledge that no one would harm him here. Intensive care also meant protection. With that in mind, he closed his eyes and let himself slip back into unconsciousness.

When he woke up the second time, he was no longer in intensive care, nor was he alone. A girl dressed up in an Ilvemorny school uniform was sleeping on his right side, carefully curled away from his body so she would not touch him and involuntarily hurt him. He recognized Zatanna on the spot and briefly wondered what she was doing here. Then he remembered that he was in the infirmary, and that if he had gone overboard, Mrs. Thompkins would be calling a certain person. And if Zatanna was there, it meant-

He slowly directed his eyes on the left side of the bed. As expected, he met the stern expression of Giovanni Zatarra. His magical guardian usually was a calm, patient man who was not often caught off-guard and held himself remarkably in any situation. However, he now looked exceedingly pale and his white gloved hands were squeezing his wand cane tightly.

"Hello Bruce," he said. His voice sounded both strained and angry. Bruce winced, knowing he had good reasons.

"Hello Giovanni."

For a moment, nothing was said. Then, the older man began:

"I understand that, growing up, you wanted to hide a few things from the authority figure. However, I was hoping that whatever you were hiding did not imply playing with your life." The Slytherin was tempted to protest, but by experience, knew his words would fall into deaf ears until his guardian was done. And the man was right anyway. Giovanni breathed in deeply and added: "I had a very interesting conversation with Leslie earlier today. Why am I only hearing now about the multiple attempts on your life over the past two years?" Bruce cringed inwardly again. Giovanni knew he was behind Professor Karddeis' sacking, but not that said professor had become the darkest mage of their era. Mrs. Thompkins must have

spoken about his visits at the infirmary. “Darkseid? And now *poison*? How long were you going to keep this a secret from us?”

The older wizard suddenly started pacing, his fury more and more visible. Bruce waited for the bomb to explode.

“If your parents were alive, you do realize they would have pulled you out ages ago? Martha must be rolling in her tomb –her son, chasing and being chased by criminals at *fourteen*? Merlin’s beard what were you thinking! And not telling us –do you realize Zatanna could have been in danger and we wouldn’t have known why?”

Bruce’s expression set into stone. He knew that. He still remembered the visions his foresight had sent him. Sometimes, they would bleed through his dreams and turned into nightmarish reminders of what could have happened.

“I know. I’m sorry,” he said.

Giovanni took another deep breath. The Slytherin knew that look. His guardian had made a decision he was not going to approve.

“When you left for Hogwarts, I agreed because it was clearly what you wanted and I thought being around people your age might do you some good. Now that I know Hogwarts isn’t as safe as I assumed, I’m pulling you out. I asked to meet your Headmistress, and I’m sending you with Zatanna to Ilvermorny.”

“No, Giovanni.”

He used a very calm, no nonsense tone. The kind that irritated people, because they thought he was being unreasonable. The older man glared at him.

“I am not asking for your opinion.”

Bruce didn’t flinch and held his head high. He couldn’t go after finally deciding to give the soulmate business a chance.

“You will have it anyway. I won’t leave Hogwarts. I can’t. Not yet.”

He covered his marked elbow with a hand, stared straight in the eyes of the man who had been his family ever since his parents’ death. As his guardian, and privy to a few family secrets, the wizard understood the meaning of such a simple gesture. His eyes hardened, and Bruce could easily guess why. The soulmate card would trump any reason Giovanni might invoke to send him away. He had witnessed how Bruce’s parents had interacted around each other, and he knew forcing soulmates apart could be traumatic. Bruce did not mention that the soulbind had not been officially acknowledged by either marked, and therefore no consequences would actually occur. At least, not until they shared a handshake with the soul-marked arm. It was one of the reasons why he used gloves whenever there was a reception where she might be present, up until now.

“Another thing you omitted to mention on purpose?” he asked coldly. The Slytherin ignored the tone and went on:

“She’s in danger. It will happen at school, but I don’t know when. I won’t leave her alone to face-” He paused and added: “I can’t tell you what, but if you knew, you’d understand.”

Giovanni tightened his jaw and narrowed his eyes.

“How do you know that?” Bruce raised an eyebrow, and the older man sighed unhappily. “Why am I even asking? Who is she?”

For a brief moment, Bruce considered lying. Then, Giovanni’s displeased attitude convinced him otherwise. Leaving him in Hogwarts was clearly taxing him. Giving up information should soothe his anxiety.

“Her name is Diana, she’s the daughter of the leader of the Amazon coven.” He paused and added: “She’s a year younger, in Gryffindor.”

“A Gryffindor and a Slytherin,” Giovanni echoed in suspicion. “Are you certain she’s your soulmate? This is not some elaborated scam?”

“She didn’t even know she had a soulmate till three weeks ago,” Bruce admitted. “She’s a great girl, honest and straightforward. A lot better than I deserve. I won’t introduce her yet,” he added before the thought could cross Giovanni’s mind. “We’re not in speaking terms right now. I messed up and I need to make it up to her. I will make it up to you and Zana too.”

As if her nickname had been enough to summon her back amongst the living, Zatanna blinked her eyes open and looked up. Her sleepy stare brightened when she saw him awake.

“Finally!” she exclaimed, moved on her knees and gave him a bone crushing hug. “Mrs. Thompsons said you’ve been sleeping for two days! Don’t scare us like that again Bruce, okay?”

The twelve year old girl’s voice sounded a pitch higher than usual. Bruce felt the guilt reawakening and clumsily patted her back. He hadn’t realized he had been out for forty eight hours. No wonder why Giovanni was so angry.

“I’ll do my best,” he promised.

“What happened to you anyway?” she asked after pulling back. “Mrs. Thompsons said girls were fighting over you again.”

Again? What had the school nurse been filling her head with?

“Zana, have I ever told you that women could be terrifying?” he said instead with a wink. The girl pouted, and he conceded that they could hear part of the truth and not the truth as he had dreamed it: “Someone’s been feeding me a messed up love potion.”

“And that’s what’s been making you sick?” she inquired with a huff. “These girls are stupid, Bruce. You can’t date them if you’re sick.”

“Well, not everyone can be as smart as you are, Zana,” he replied, affectionately rubbing her hair. “And it’s just one girl. I’ll have a word with her later, to tell her to stop harassing me.” Well, *tell* was a euphemism, he mentally amended. *Curse* would be more accurate. “I’m sorry I made you worry.”

“You better be!” she retorted and gave him another bone crushing hug. “I’ll forgive you this time. You got me out of an exam I really didn’t want to attend.”

Giovanni frowned at his daughter. Bruce grinned, amused.

“Glad to be of service.”

A few hours later, his guardian reluctantly left Hogwarts with the firm promise that if Bruce encountered any new threat, he would be one of the first to know.

SYIH

Diana had felt uneasy for the past two days. She had woken up tired, her senses dulled, at the point where Etta had even suggested she headed to the infirmary. It wasn’t until Napi remarked that Wayne hadn’t been at the Slytherin table that morning that she thought his absence and her unease could be related. After closer look, his friends did look worried. Or angry. Or maybe a little bit of both. Xebel in particular seemed in thunderous mood and very unforgiving of students’ transgressions. Rumors had it she even made a seventh year cry.

“Why do you care?” Charlie asked, his frown more pronounced lately. “He’s probably out of Hogwarts enjoying his Pure-blood privileges. Vale claimed she usually went riding Gryffins with her family on the weekends. Why wouldn’t he?”

“Or maybe it’s another girl,” Sameer whispered, looking somewhat wistful. “I heard he’s been constructing a harem in France to welcome his new girlfriends.”

Diana gave him an odd glance.

“Who said such a thing?” she inquired. The rumor was definitively faked –it was too big to be true, but she was curious of the source.

“Barry Allen, the Hufflepuff who always hangs out with everyone.” Diana raised an eyebrow –wasn’t he one of Wayne’s friends? “Ever since his first year, he has the juiciest pieces to tell. The Hogwarts Gazette has been dying to recruit him for the gossip column, but he doesn’t want to.” He added with a conspirator-like whisper: “He says people will stop talking to him because they fear he will spill their secrets on paper.”

“He does seem to be spilling them already,” she pointed out.

“It’s more like retelling and embellishing, Di,” Etta said with an eager grin. “Half of the things he says aren’t true anyway, everyone knows it.”

“But it’s fun to listen anyway,” Charlie picked up. “I like the one where he claims a third year found the Room of Requirement after dreaming of it in Divination. Professor Faust wanted him to prove it by showing where it was, and the guy –or the girl? –denied saying that ‘*it was supposed to remain a mystery*’!”

“Or the one that ran in second year about the monster living in the underground of Hogwarts,” Sameer said, eyes bright in mirth. “The professors even had to evacuate the school, and they didn’t find a thing.” He added in a conspiracy tone: “*Or so they say.*”

Diana smiled slightly. She remembered that rumor. Many students, mostly Gryffindors, had been tempted to find the tunnels and explore the depth of the castle. Steve had been amongst them. He had also claimed that he had found a passage through the Slytherin dungeons and had gone deep down, but had fallen on a dead end. She smiled fondly at the memory. Even though his betrayal still hurt, they had gone through good moments.

“Yeah, but he also tells true stuff.” Charlie recalled, amused. “When the tarantulas came running from the Forbidden Forest-“

He brutally paused, and everyone fell silent. The spider invasion had happened in May, right when Steve had run from Hogwarts to commit his attack. She had always suspected he might have somehow provoked it as a distraction, so professors wouldn’t notice his disappearance right away. The rumors had thankfully attributed the invasion to a conflict between the arachnids and the centaurs, orchestrated by the former Professor Karddeis as a revenge for being sacked. No one paid attention to a rogue student after that.

“Didn’t Allen say something about Karddeis releasing an odd pheromone in the air that increased their instinct for fresh meat?” Etta forcefully continued the conversation.

“Yeah, they evacuated the Slytherin dorm for a full week. They were cramped in the old wing –which one didn’t stop complaining about the dust or whatever?”

Diana was about to answer with a name when a thought crossed her mind. She couldn’t explain it –perhaps it was the mention of Slytherin, perhaps her mind was still subconsciously lingering on Bruce Wayne, but she suddenly wondered if her soulmate played a part in spreading these extravagant rumors. As a wizard who seemed to do his best in shielding his true nature to others, he would be the kind of person to keep a tight grasp on whatever was being said. And she was certain that Allen belonged to his group of friends.

Breakfast was soon over, and they had to head to class. Diana had trouble focusing on the rest of the morning and was only settled by lunchtime.

He was back at the Slytherin table then, sitting between Xebel and a younger redhead girl – Barbara Gordon, the Head Auror’s daughter. He looked pale and exhausted and very chastened by whatever Xebel was telling him. Diana still found her both pissed and worried. The other Slytherins were glancing in their direction with keen interest, only to be reminded to mind their own business with an occasional glare from the Prefect. Curiosity rouse again, and she bit her lower lip, wondering what she should do. The soulmate situation was weighting on her mind, as she hadn’t really taken a decision yet. As she had grown amongst the Amazon coven; she had been raised with certain beliefs. The news of a soulmate –a male

one –should not be welcomed. And yet...and yet, the idea of something that was hers only tempted her greatly.

Her elbow itched and when she looked up, she met Wayne's gaze. The Slytherin boy gave her a tight smile. A shiver ran down her spine –there was no denying their connection was growing stronger. Or perhaps her ignorance had played its part and she had never noticed how her body reacted when he was around.

“Diana? You're daydreaming again?”

Etta's voice interrupted the eye contact and Diana forced herself back to the present. She apologized and gave her friends enough attention to satisfy their need. A few moments later, she spotted Curry leaving the table and heading to the staircase. The black sheep of Gryffindor always moved alone until he joined his friends before class. Unless she was mistaken, their second period was free. Well, so was hers. She glanced one last time at the Slytherin table. As if sensing her gaze, Wayne looked up in her direction a split second later. Diana felt herself smiling bitterly in turn. She couldn't back out, it was too late. Magic was already operating between them. It was only a matter of time now, before the bond was fully formed.

She might as well get this over with. Magic must have picked them for a reason, and she should get used to the idea that their lives would be intertwined forever.

“Sorry guys, I need to stop by the library,” she said. “I'll join you in class.”

Her friends muttered their agreement, and she quickly hurried into the corridors after Curry.

SYIH

When Bruce had returned to the Slytherin dorm, he hadn't expected a warm welcome. And he had been right. Mera had greeted him coldly before spending half an hour berating him for acting so rashly without warning any of them. Before experimenting on his foresight, he had forgotten to put a silencing spell around his bed. His dorm mates had been awakened by his screams, and Queen had rushed to the girls' dorm to fetch her in the hopes she would be able to do something. In the end, Mrs. Thompkins had been called, declared him magically drained, and transported him to an emergency ward.

His friends had been cursing him for the whole time he'd been unconscious and, no doubt, plotting revenge for his selfishness. He couldn't blame them either. And so he willingly endured Mera's anger, skipping breakfast in the process, before hurrying to class. Lois gave him the cold shoulder in History of Magic while Clark let his disapproval known with an uncharacteristic scowl. Mera was still ranting at lunchtime, seconded by Barbara, when he felt Prince's attention on him. The first time, she seemed to be examining him, and he felt more ashamed for worrying them. This was another thing he'd had to put on his 'things to make up for' list.

Their last class of the day was with Gryffindor, and Bruce was expecting another scolding from Arthur. He was surprised when the other boy acted normally, chatting with him like nothing had happened in the past two days. It wasn't until they were about to reach the class that he announced with an amused grin:

"Got a message for you by the way, from the princess. Same class, four p.m." Arthur wriggled his eyebrows. "Someone is skipping potions."

Bruce whispered *tempus* and felt his blood run cold when the time appeared in bold letters.

"It's three fifty five, Arthur." Even if he took off now, he would be late.

The Gryffindor opened his eyes wide and innocently whispered:

"Is it already? I didn't notice."

Sonova-

He ran.

The classroom had to be, of course, on the other side of the castle. He wasn't still quite in peak condition after two days of lying down, but he didn't want to make another bad impression. Messing up once was enough. When he arrived, Prince was, of course, already there. She was reading an untitled book and was startled when he entered. Bruce wondered what kind of sight he offered: he was panting heavily, sweating from the race and felt his skin hot enough to turn red. Given her double take, it mustn't have been pretty.

"Sorry, I'm a bit late," he blurted immediately. He didn't know how much but figured it must be close to ten minutes. "I was made aware of your message just now."

She blinked slowly.

"I told Arthur four fifteen," she announced and took her bag to place her book back. "He said you had a free period then."

The Slytherin blinked, slowly registered her words, and flushed even redder.

"That goddamn Gryff," he muttered under his breath. "We have potions, actually." She winced slightly in response. Professor Dent was not the most understanding teacher in Hogwarts. Curry was definitively setting him up for trouble. "They'll cover for me. Or Mera will," he amended, hoping she had enough goodwill to do so. "If not, I can survive detention."

Prince made an odd sound, like a chortle, and he realized she was smiling.

"Was it payback of some sort?" she rightfully assumed.

He grimaced.

"Yeah, definitively. I'm ashamed to say I deserved it."

She lost her smile and asked:

“I heard you were at the infirmary. Are you alright?”

“Remember how you found me the night of the Yule ball?” She nodded. “Same reason.”

“You were poisoned again?” she asked, confirming his initial thought that she had overheard a lot more than just his revelation that morning.

“Sort of. My food wasn’t...safe that evening, so I tried to trigger a vision of the past to find out who was after me once and for all.” He grimaced. “I told you it was tiring if I enacted it; I kind of just...exhausted myself in the process.”

Prince nodded slowly as she integrated the news.

“And the culprit is...?” she asked eventually.

“Marcy Graves,” he replied honestly. “She bought the potion to mess up with me. I intend to deal with her later.”

He didn’t tell her about the girl’s real intentions, neither did he mention the second vision. He didn’t want Prince to believe he was doing this in an attempt to protect her and if they were soulmates, there would always be time later. From what he had foreseen in his previous visions, she was a powerful witch on her own right. And he had the feeling she would not appreciate the sentiment.

At the name, Prince immediately frowned in distaste.

“I know her,” and when she spoke, Bruce heard anger in her tone. “She made Charlie miserable a full semester. If you need anything, just ask, I’ll be happy to help.”

“I may hold you onto that,” he replied lightly before turning serious: “I don’t think my health was the primary reason why you asked me to meet.”

And just like that she turned all businesslike. She straightened her shoulders, met him square in the eye, as if preparing for battle.

“Why did you change your mind?” she asked bluntly. “You seemed so against a soulmate at first, and now you are more opened to the idea. Did something happen?”

Bruce felt a little confused.

“I thought we covered that last time.”

“Last time, you...*apologized* for trying to intimidate me. And you promised not to give away my secret,” she crossed her arms determinedly. “If we are doing this, I want to know why you changed your mind about the soulmate business. We need to be honest with each other, or we’ll never get anywhere.”

He thought over their last meeting and realized she was right. They had argued, he had revealed his weakness, but they hadn't really solved anything. He stared at the floor, wondering how he could formulate his thoughts. Opening up to someone he didn't really know was hard for him. But if he wanted to make things work, Prince was correct, he needed to be honest. And so, he breathed in deeply and started:

"You're right, I didn't want a soulmate. My parents were soulmates, and they were very close. I really looked up to the relation they had. But when they died, I wasn't..." he shrugged. "I don't know. Foresight is a terrible burden. I don't know how my parents handled it and I didn't want my soulmate to suffer the consequences. But when we first spoke-" he marked another pause. "You were... I don't know, different than what I expected." He looked down, looked up again. "You have a backstory that needs protecting. I'm good at keeping secrets. Magic must have bound us for a reason. I want to figure out why."

Prince looked troubled for a moment.

"I was thinking the same earlier," she admitted. "I was raised by the Amazons. We are taught to be independent and rely on no one but ourselves. That does not mean I am against having a soulmate. I don't consider it a burden, but an additional strength." She gave him a once-over. "You're not the kind of person I would usually be drawn to. My friends are outgoing, bold and they don't hide their feelings."

"Typical Gryffindors," Bruce pointed out. Prince chuckled at that.

"Yes, typical Gryffindors," she echoed with a smile. "We might be a mismatch on paper, but magic always has a reason, right?"

He understood the question in her tone. She must have as many interrogations as he, but she sounded willing to try. It was, he believed, more than he deserved.

"Well, we are already bonding over how to get back at a loony girl. I say it's a start." Ironical, he thought, as most of his second and third year friendships had been made while investigating and later taking down Professor Karddeis.

"Speaking of Graves, do you know what you'll do?" Prince asked. Bruce bit back a smile; she really looked like she'd give a lot for payback.

"Maybe. I want her to know I'm not a pushover; that if she tries something like that again, retaliation will be ten times worse." He did have a few ideas, but nothing he felt fitting so far. Prince's expression was pensive, as if she had just thought of something. "What is it?"

"I may know a spell," she admitted hesitantly. "I looked it up back when she started being... really mean to Charlie. But I wasn't experienced enough to cast it; and the backlash wasn't worth it. It might be a little bit different now."

His interest stirred up.

"What is it?"

“It’s a karma curse,” she replied, a little embarrassed. “Whenever a person does something bad, bad luck strikes them back twice as hard.”

He raised an eyebrow, a little startled. That was more Slytherin-like than expected.

“Sounds a bit rash, especially coming from you.” He grinned. “I still like it.”

She shrugged self-consciously.

“I *was* angry on Charlie’s behalf. And I figured it could be helpful later.”

“You should definitively show me,” he said. He wasn’t stupid enough to believe he might be able to cast the spell, but even for curiosity’s sake, he wanted to study it. And he knew Victor might be interested in it too. The Ravenclaw was always looking for new spell to study.

Silence fell, as everything seemed to be said. They stared at each other, slightly at loss at what to do next. Prince steeled herself first and asked:

“So, how do we do this?”

“The first part is acknowledgment, which we are both halfway through,” he said, searching in his memories. “I’ll have to ask Alfred to bring me my parents’ journals to see if they had to go through something, but I think the bound grows naturally.”

“I know how a soulbound works, I did my research too,” she corrected with an amused smile. Bruce felt his ears heating for assuming she was lacking information. “I guess I’m asking, what now?”

He didn’t hesitate.

“We get to know each other. You still don’t trust me,” she didn’t contradict him. “And I have trouble opening up to people. So, friends?”

“So you don’t want us to date.” She looked relieved. He thought he might take offence at that. “Friends sound like a good start. I just have one condition.”

“What is it?”

“Don’t tell my mother.” Bruce blinked, startled. Diana looked even more embarrassed as she explained: “She thinks soulmates are –and I quote: ‘*a clever invention from wizards to shackle witches onto themselves to secure an everlasting servant*’. I didn’t tell her about you yet.”

The Slytherin grinned, amused.

“Works for me,” he lost his smile. “I don’t think it would be prudent to advertise a soulbound. I mean, to the whole school. You can tell your friends, but-”

She shook her head.

“I agree. It’s rare enough and not well known. I won’t tell my friends, they wouldn’t understand. Except for Napi, but he already knew.”

“Napi Blackfoot? Doesn’t surprise me,” Bruce said, and she looked surprised that he knew her name. He wondered if he should tell her that nearly every Slytherin knew his name but decided not to. If the shaman descendant wanted to keep his anonymity, it was his right.

“Don’t worry Prince, I got a rumor spreader under my thumb if I need a distraction.”

“Barry Allen?” he nodded and she sounded pleased with something. “I thought he might be working for you.”

“I don’t know if working is the right answer, but we are friends.” Of some sorts. He didn’t want to start explaining the complicated relation he entertained with the Hufflepuff.

Prince gave him an odd smile:

“You know, you *could* call me by my first name, Bruce.”

The sound of his name in her mouth did *something* to him. He realized he liked hearing it.

“It’s a deal, Diana.”

If she felt anything in response, she didn’t show it. Instead, she held out her hand, ready to erase the past few weeks to start anew. Bruce felt very lucky he was given a chance at all. He took her hand as a formal handshake. The situation was a bit silly, but he felt it necessary. The moment their skin touched-

Her skin was warm, her palm roughened by the use of her wand. The connection fluttered between them, it dimmed slightly before shifting into something stronger.

He also felt –*insecurity, wonder, fear, curiosity, caution, guilt, anticipation*-

Both gasped and released the other’s hand. His mark wasn’t itching anymore, but warm on his skin. It pulsed lightly, and the foreign feelings became a more permanent fixture in his chest. Diana’s eyes were wide open, staring at him in wonder.

“So that’s how it feels like,” she whispered, and reached out for him. Bruce let her take his hand again –*awe, warmth, curiosity, excitement*- she looked at him, and he knew what she was about to say before she opened her mouth, because he felt it too: “It’s amazing.”

“Yeah,” he echoed, and thought to himself –*why hadn’t he done this earlier? Probably because you thought it would be intrusive*, a little voice replied. Afterthought, it did feel a bit intrusive, but not in a bad way. “It’s like we’re-

“-not alone,” Diana whispered. “It feels like-“

“-we’re not alone,” he echoed and met her eye. Was she shivering inside like him? “Wow.”

“It’s nice.”

“Yeah.” He had never done drugs or gotten high, but he suspected that was what people felt. It would take time to acclimate to the sensation. “You think it’s going to dim in time?”

“I don’t know.” She paused, reflexively touched her elbow. “It might, once we get used to it.” She gave him a tight smile. “For such a stoic guy, you sure *feel* a lot.”

She was amused, but reining it in because she wanted to give him a semblance of dignity.

“Well, so do you,” he pointed out, and was certain she could sense his embarrassment. “It’s... refreshing.”

Refreshing was perhaps not the word he was looking for, but it was the closest he felt to appropriate. She seemed to understand anyway, and he wondered if that was what soulmates were really about.

And then, the door was nearly pulled out of its hinges, and a flurry of golden and red barged into the room, wand out. Bruce recognized Etta Candy, red in the face, ready to put up a fight.

“You step away from my friend, slimy snake!” she shouted. “Curry told me everything! I swear you won’t put your greasy hands on her!”

Bruce blinked. Diana stared, incredulously. Behind Candy, his so-called friend waved at him with a big, smug grin. The Slytherin felt this was just the beginning of the long list of trouble Arthur intended to put him through.

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