

## Chapter 7

“Harry!” Sirius shouted across the platform, waving his hands wildly above his head.

Harry set his and Dora’s trunks on a cart and looked up with a sigh.

“Does he have to do that every year?” Dora asked. “It’s like he thinks we forget what he looks like or something.”

“He thinks he’s a lot funnier than he is,” Harry smirked.

Grabbing the handle of the cart, he pushed it over to where Sirius, Andi, and Ted were waiting for them near the line of fireplaces.

“How was your first year at Ilvermorny?” Sirius asked before grabbing Harry in a headlock and ruffling his hair.

“It was free of you,” Harry grumbled, pulling himself free.

“Any new girlfriends?” he asked with a grin.

“Maybe,” Harry said with a smirk.

“He started dating Amanda when we got back from Christmas break,” Dora huffed.

“Amanda?” Andi asked, her brow furrowed. “You mean that redhead that came over last Summer?”

Dora nodded, and Sirius whistled.

“An older woman?” he asked, wiggling his eyebrows. “I’m impressed.”

Dora snorted, “I’m not. Every time we tried to study, those two would sneak off to make out somewhere. They got us kicked out of the library a few times.”

“Totally worth it,” Harry grinned.

“This isn’t going to cause problems between the two of you, is it?” Andi asked warily.

“Why would it?” Harry asked.

“Well, what if you break up with Amanda, and she wants to come over to visit Dora?” Andi asked.

“They already broke up,” Dora pouted. “And they get along just fine. I can’t stand my exes, and they still hang out like nothing’s changed. It’s really annoying.”

Sirius laughed, and Ted chuckled while Andi pulled her daughter in for a hug. When Harry looked at the other men in confusion, they just shook their heads. Slinging his arm around his shoulders, Sirius led him towards the fireplace.

“I’ll explain when we get home,” he whispered before pausing and raising his voice to a normal level. “Actually, wait. Ted, do you mind going first just in case Harry decides to do another face plant?”

“Ha ha, very funny,” Harry said.

Shrugging off his arm, he grabbed a handful of Floo Powder and stepped into the fireplace.

“Forty-seven fifty-six Gulch Drive!” Harry yelled.

This time, he was careful to tuck in his arms and legs and shut his mouth as he spun through the Floo Network. His confidence grew as the trip continued without issue. Just as he was about to reach his stop, Harry took a step to walk smoothly out.

His stop came a full second after he thought it would. The pain that shot up his spine reminded him of the time he thought there was a curb, and there wasn't. Groaning, he stepped into the living room, cursing loudly and often, only stopping when Sirius stepped out smoothly behind him and started laughing loudly.

"You really need to get better at that," Sirius chuckled.

"I'm standing, aren't I?" Harry asked angrily.

Sirius laughed again as the others stepped out of the Floo. Still rubbing his back and grumbling, Harry grabbed Dora's trunk and started carrying it to her room. Once everything was put away, they sat down in the kitchen, where Andi had cooked dinner.

"How do you think you did on your tests?" Andi asked, passing along the tray of homemade tacos.

"Good." "Fine," Harry and Dora responded.

"Professor Banks said my project was one of the best," Dora explained further. "She said if I keep it up, I'll do fine on my LAMPs next year."

"What does that stand for again?" Sirius asked.

"Levels in Aptitude of Magical Performance," she recited.

"It's the same as our OWLs," Andi told him before turning to Harry. "And how do you think you did this year?"

“Pretty good,” Harry shrugged. “Professor Wilkinson gave me extra credit for my broom project at the start of the year. He also told me I should try my dueling out at the tournament in New York next month.”

“Why didn’t you tell us about this sooner?” Sirius asked.

“Because I just found out,” Harry said, pulling a colorful pamphlet from his pocket and handing it to him. “I’ll be competing in the under-sixteen bracket. It’s a two-day, single-elimination tournament. Do you think you can get time off to take me?”

“I’ll ask first thing tomorrow,” Sirius told him with a grin.

“Under-sixteen?” Andi asked, yanking the pamphlet out of Sirius’ hand. “Doesn’t that mean you’ll be competing against second years, as well?”

“Well, yeah,” Harry shrugged.

“Do you think I could compete in the under-eighteen bracket?” Dora asked suddenly.

“Why?” Andi asked sharply, eyes narrowed. “You’ve never shown an interest in dueling before.”

Reaching under the table, Harry gave Dora’s knee a supportive squeeze. He’d asked her to join his training with Professor Wilkinson so he had someone else to practice with. She couldn’t always go with him, but she usually went twice a week. He had no idea she was interested in dueling herself, but he knew Andi wouldn’t like the idea, that was for sure.

“I just want to see how I measure up,” Dora said, trying to act nonchalant. “And, if Harry’s going to be there anyway, why not give it a try?”

“Because it’s dangerous,” Andi said flatly.

“But I’ve been training with Harry, and Professor Wilkinson said I was really good for my age,” Dora said, looking at her parents pleadingly. “I just want to see how I’d do. And it’s not that dangerous if you’re going to let Harry go. Please?”

Harry had to bite his lip to stop a chuckle when she swelled up her bottom lip and enlarged the size of her eyes slightly. Ted and Andi shared a long look that carried an entire conversation before Andi sighed in defeat.

“Fine,” she said shortly.

“Yes!” Dora cheered excitedly.

As she threw her hands in the air, her knuckles caught the edge of her plate and dumped it into Harry’s lap.

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After dinner, the family moved out to the newly installed pool to sit and relax. The Wireless played in the background while Harry tried not to get caught checking out Dora in her red swimsuit.

“I wish we had dueling tournaments like that back in England,” Sirius said to Ted as they lounged in white chairs with Butterbeers in their hands. “That would’ve been so much fun.”

“I wonder why they don’t,” Ted mused.

“Lack of interest, probably,” Sirius grumbled. “You know the Ministry only pays for something like that if someone can make a profit. No one but parents would go to see kids duel. The national tournament gets all the attention.”

“True,” Ted nodded.

The sound of a bird chirping sounded from the house, signaling a Floo call and causing Sirius to sigh.

"I'll get it," he said. "It's probably for me anyways." he said, setting down his Butterbeer and climbing out of his lounge.

He disappeared inside the house for less than a minute before coming back out, looking slightly troubled. With a flick of his wand, he changed the Wireless to a different station.

"...what we know so far," the female host said. "It's just been confirmed by senior MACUSA officials that a member of the Magical Intelligence Bureau has just been caught violating Russian airspace and was subsequently captured. From what we know based on President Rurik Kiselev's press release, this isn't the first time MACUSA has done so. Many of you will remember that, just a few months ago, Harry Potter became the first person to build a broom capable of breaking the speed of sound.

"How does this connect to the MIB? Well, Harry Potter sold the rights to that design to Lockheed, who went on to design the X-87 Javelin. This prototype, which is a refined design of Mr. Potter's original supersonic broom, is what the Russian's say the MIB agent was riding when he was apprehended. They claim, that for months, MIB agents have been flying across Russia to gather intelligence. Because of the X-87's incredible top speed of over Mach 2, the Russians had been unable to stop, or intercept the riders.

"Today, they claim to have laid a trap. They found a pattern to the flights and laid out a trap for anyone entering their airspace. A trap, they say, the agent flew into early this afternoon. We've yet to hear a response from the White House on this, but we expect one soon. This situation is evolving rapidly. With me in the studio is John Harken, historian, author, and former advisor to President Marks. John, I think the biggest concern for everyone listening is the possibility of war. Do you see that happening?"

"I'd say it's not likely, but certainly a concern we should share," a man with a deep voice replied. "This is a severe diplomatic issue, to be sure, but I don't see it coming to war if MACUSA handles it properly. Fortunately, we're not in the Cold War anymore. The big concern right now, is going to be over sanctions against the US from Russia and its allies. You can expect prices to go up sharply over the next few days."

“Bollocks,” Sirius said, switching the Wireless back to a music station. “Leave it to those idiots in the MIB to screw everything up. Magical Intelligence Bureau, my arse, more like Morons Inspecting Buttholes.”

Andi swatted his arm with her magazine.

“Wait, I thought the MFBI were the MIB,” Ted said curiously.

“No, we’re the men in black,” Sirius corrected. “The MIB just like to ruin our good name.”

“Harry?” Dora asked softly.

Despite her tone, everyone looked over at him.

“I’m going for a fly,” he said, avoiding their eyes as he headed to the house.

“Harry!” Andi called.

He ignored her and marched into his room, where he punched the bed and cursed. Hitting his mattress until he ran out of breath, he slid down to sit on the floor with his back against his dresser.

Harry couldn’t believe something he’d made was used for something so stupid. Thinking of the gold he’d gleefully added to his vault now left a sour taste in his mouth. Even worse, with the deal Ted had worked out with Lockheed, he’d be collecting royalties for the next two decades. He’d felt proud at the time, maybe even a little bit arrogant, but now, he felt like a fool. He wished he could cancel the deal, but even if that was possible, it would take back what had already happened.

They’d all fled to America to escape a war that had destroyed his family, and now he’d inadvertently nearly started another one.

Shaking off those thoughts, Harry stood and made his way over to his trunk. Throwing open the lid carelessly, he dug through the enlarged interior until he found his brooms and paused. One was the Lockheed that Sirius had given him for his birthday, and the other was the very broom that had caused all of this.

He grabbed the crude, homemade broom he'd been so proud of and pulled it out, thinking back to how it all started. The charms really weren't as complex as most people thought they were. Going fast was easy. You just had to have a certain disregard for your own safety. Until he'd come along, every speed record had been set on modified Quidditch brooms. Brooms that still had safety features to protect players and the general customer from breaking their neck during a turn. Magic didn't have the same limits that the human body did, as Harry learned the hard way on Ilvermorny's Clock Tower.

Getting the brooms to go as fast as he wanted wasn't that hard. He just neglected to put in the charms that would normally limit it. What was much harder, and took most of his time, was figuring out a way to stay on the damn thing. Once he figured that out, all he needed was basic charms to limit the acceleration and turning. It was only the strength of his Propulsion Charm, which he'd pulled back on after his first failure, that kept him from going even faster.

Clutching the broom tightly, Harry left his room and headed for the front door to avoid his family. He'd just stepped off the front porch when he mounted it and took off into the air like a shot. With a loud cry, Levina joined him, flapping her powerful wings as she tried to keep up with him.

As they got further from the house, the skies turned dark to the sound of the distant rumble of thunder. Levina flew in circles, conjuring a storm that matched his emotions. The rain started to fall, biting into his skin as he followed her. Lightning flashed overhead, followed by crackling, rumbling thunder that reverberated in his chest.

Like it was planned, they both flew straight up through the roiling grey clouds. Harry's skin was soaked from the moisture in the air. Mixed with the wind, it left him cold and covered in



goosebumps. He ignored the discomfort and continued upwards, neck and neck, with Levina until they broke through the top of the cloud.

The red light of the setting sun warmed his cold, damp body. For a moment, he closed his eyes and savored the relief. As his upward momentum came to an end, he hovered in the air, weightless, with Levina next to him, her wings spread wide. Just as he began to feel lightheaded from the lack of oxygen, they began to fall.

Harry pushed his broom into a plummeting dive, rapidly outpacing his companion. She cowered loudly behind him a moment before his sonic boom reflected off of the ground and back towards him just as he broke through the cloud layer. With only basic brakes and turning, he knew, at these speeds, his broom would struggle to slow down enough to pull up before he hit the ground.

So, he didn't bother to brake. Pulling straight up, he intentionally upset the broom, sending himself into a tumble. Fighting to point the nose straight up, the sudden spin and twists as he fought for control sent the blood rushing from his head. Muscles straining, Harry grunted and manhandled the broom into doing what he wanted. Looking straight up at the darkening sky, he used his broom's greatest asset, power, and used it to fight against gravity.

The force the move exerted on his body pushed an involuntary grunt from his lips, but it worked. His momentum slowed far faster than it would have if he'd tried to brake. When he was going slow enough, he pitched forward and took off over the desert, his mind wandering.

Harry knew there was nothing he could do to stop what had already happened, but he could stop it from happening again. He was going to keep working on his broom like he wanted to, making designs that flew faster and higher than anyone had ever thought possible before. But he wasn't selling the design again. He was going to keep it for himself. It would be up to him to decide who got to use the designs and who didn't. Never again would he let a company or government use his work without him knowing exactly what it was for.

He knew he thought differently to most wizards. It wasn't his intelligence that helped him become the first to break the sound barrier on a broom; it was his ability to think audaciously. Staring out at the night sky, more audacious thoughts came to mind, more firsts that he could accomplish.

As the moon rose over the mountains in the distance, the most audacious idea came to mind. With a grin, he turned back and headed for home.

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Three weeks later, Harry and his family Portkeyed to New York for the national dueling tournament. When he'd been told where it was, he thought they'd end up in some hidden part of Madison Square Garden that magicals kept to themselves. Instead, they ended up in a sprawling, grassy field in a rural area.

"Where are we?" Dora asked, wrinkling her nose at the smell of nearby cows. "I thought we were going to New York. Did you cast the spell right?"

"Of course, I did," Sirius said defensively, even as he looked around in confusion. "This is where the brochure told us to go. It's not my fault they got it wrong."

"We're in the right place," Andi said, rolling her eyes. "New York is more than just a city. We're close to the border with Pennsylvania, near one of those Amish towns. Look."

Pointing to a distant green banner, big white letters spelled out; *Welcome to the U-21 international Dueling Championships!*

Beyond that was what looked, to Harry, more like a state fair than a dueling tournament. There were rides, games, kiosks selling souvenirs, and way in the back, he could see a dirt field surrounded by a wooden fence and tiered benches. Sharing a look with Dora, he could tell she

was as surprised as he was. When he'd envisioned the tournament, this wasn't what he'd expected.

"I really wish I'd known this is what to expect when I packed," Dora sighed. "I packed clothes for a city, not a farmers market."

"Come on, Dora, this'll be great," Ted said excitedly. "Let's go get you kids signed in."

Harry shrugged and followed after him while Dora sighed and trudged along. In the end, he didn't really care where the tournament took place. All that mattered to him was how he did in the rankings. After hearing about the situation with Russia, Harry was more determined than ever to prove himself.

As they were waiting in line to sign in for the tournament, a short, busty brunette and a slightly taller girl who looked a little younger than Harry approached them.

"Sirius?" she called softly.

Harry watched as his Godfather turned with his trademark lopsided grin, only to go slack-jawed when he set eyes on the woman.

"Marlene!?" he gasped, looking like he'd seen a ghost.

The woman smiled nervously and nodded, her eyes tearing up. Suddenly, Sirius lunged forward and hugged her tightly, a choked laugh escaping his mouth. Harry was shocked to see tears falling from his eyes.

"I thought you were dead," he said thickly.

"I'm sorry," Marlene mumbled into his chest. "We used a Vanishing Cabinet to escape before they burned down the house. When the Ministry declared us dead, my parents left for America, and I couldn't leave them behind. I wanted to tell you, but with Nott still free, it was too dangerous."

"It's alright," Sirius said, pulling back to hold her at arm's length with a wide smile. "I'm just glad you survived. Merlin, Remus is going to flip when he sees you. You look just as beautiful as you did in school."

"And you're still a cad," Marlene chuckled tearfully. "Oh, I'm sorry. Sirius, this is my daughter, Jenna. Sweetie, this is Sirius Black, a good friend of mine from my school days."

"Hello," Sirius said to the girl before turning back to Marlene with a smirk. "Married with a kid, look at you all grown up."

"Divorced, actually," she told him with a small smile. "I married a Muggle, and he didn't take too well to learning about the magical world. What about you?"

"Oh, he's still the same old reprobate," Andi replied with a smile. "I'm Andromeda Tonks, Sirius' cousin. This is my husband, Ted. Our daughter, Nymphadora--"

"Mom," Dora whined. "It's just Tonks."

"And this is Harry," Andi continued, ignoring the interruption.

"Hello," Marlene said, a soft and sad smile on her face as she looked at Harry. "You look just like your father but with your mother's eyes."

"Marlene and your mum were best friends at Hogwarts," Sirius smiled.

“Really?” Harry asked. “Could you tell me about her sometime? Every time I ask Sirius, he starts talking about what a nice ass she had.”

“I do not!” Sirius protested. “I only said that once.”

Marlene laughed while Harry and Dora were distracted with the signup sheet.

“So, what brings you here?” Sirius asked. “Jenna’s a bit young for the dueling tournament, isn’t she?”

“Oh, she’s not competing,” she told him. “We live just a few miles away. We come here every year to enjoy the fair and watch the duels.”

“You’re all set,” the wizard manning the table smiled, handing Harry and Dora their badges. “The tournament doesn’t start for another two hours, so feel free to explore until then. The officials will explain the rules before it starts. Good luck to both of you.”

“Thanks,” Dora beamed, her hair turning from green to a happy pink.

Harry followed after her as they rejoined their family and started to explore the fair. Bemusedly, he watched Sirius talking animatedly with Marlene. For years, he watched as his Godfather had been able to charm all sorts of women with his flirting. It was quite refreshing to watch Marlene laugh them off without so much as a blush.

About half an hour later, Remus managed to find them. His jaw hit the floor when Sirius re-introduced him to Marlene. While they had a short but emotional reunion, Sirius explained what had happened to her a bit more.

“Marlene was part of a resistance group during the war with me, Remus, and your parents,” he told them. “When we were responding to a Death Eater raid, she dueled and killed Thadeus Nott. His son, Titus, didn’t take that well. He put a price on her head, though we could never prove it. About a month later, we got word that her house had been destroyed by Fiendfyre. Nasty, dark magic. The place was reduced to nothing but a pile of ash by the time we got it under control. We assumed Marlene and her parents had been killed. It wouldn’t be the first time something like that had happened.”

“So, she let them think she was dead and went into hiding,” Harry nodded.

“What happened to Nott?” Dora asked.

“Nothing,” Sirius sighed, running a hand through his hair. “The bastard stayed out of Azkaban by claiming the Imperius Curse. If he knew she was still alive, he’d probably he’d probably still be after her.”

After wandering around the fair, going on rides, playing games, and eating food, Harry and Dora eventually left to get ready for the tournament. There was a long and, in Harry’s opinion, boring safety and rules lecture before they finally started the tournament. As he stepped out into the arena for his first match, he spotted his family cheering loudly. Even Jenna and Marlene joined in, Jenna clutching the giant stuffed Niffler that Sirius had won.

Harry’s first match was over quickly. His ability to cast silently let him make quick work of the Indian witch he faced. It was a while before Dora had her first match of the day. She did well, but she didn’t have nearly as easy of a time as he had. After a couple of minutes of slinging spells back and forth with the Chinese wizard she was competing against, Dora caught him with a Disarming Hex.

While Harry won all eight of his matches for the day, qualifying for the finals, Dora lost her third match against a Nigerian witch who didn’t even use a wand. She was a bit upset at that, and as

he tried to console her, Harry was also bound and determined to learn how to cast magic without a wand.

Once the tournament was finished for the day, Sirius invited everyone out to a celebratory dinner. It ended up being a raucous affair, filled with jokes, laughter, and humorous stories from the adults' days at Hogwarts. Jenna was a quiet and shy girl just a year younger than Harry, but she slowly opened up to him and Dora as the night wore on.

Throughout the meal, Harry couldn't help but notice the way Sirius and Marlene gravitated towards each other.

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"Witches and wizards, it's time for the championship rounds!" the announcer yelled.

As the crowd cheered, the thin man with a curly black mustache, top hat, and bright red jacket grinned.

"First up, we have the under-sixteen championship bout," he continued once the noise died down. "Let's hear it for our two finalists! From Italy, we have Arturo Moretti, and representing the United States, we have Harry Potter!"

Harry stepped into the arena and stared at his opponent, a handsome second year with dark hair, hazel eyes, and a confident grin.

"And now, our special guest referee, a five-time former world dueling champion, Filius Flitwick!" the man announced.

Harry wasn't sure why, but his family and Marlene cheered loudly. He thought the name might be familiar, but he couldn't remember where he would have heard it from. A moment later, a tiny, smiling man walked out into the arena.

"Good day, gentlemen," Flitwick squeaked happily. "Let's keep this a clean fight, and good luck to both of you. Bow, retreat to your positions, and wait for my signal."

Harry and Arturo bowed, walked back ten paces, then turned to face each other. Holding his wand aloft, Flitwick glanced at both of them. A heartbeat later, red sparks shot from his wand. Harry immediately circled to his right, out of the way of a shouted Disarming Hex, and began firing hexes as fast as he could.

"Protego!" Arturo yelled.

His shield formed solidly, but Harry grinned as he continued to rapidly fire disarmers, stunners, and leg-lockers. Quickly, Arturo's shield started to flicker and die, just like the other opponents Harry had faced that managed to defend themselves. Unlike the others, however, when it did collapse, he got out of the way before Harry could end the match.

In the end, that did nothing more than prolong the inevitable. Harry was just too fast at casting, and Arturo, even as a second year, didn't know any spells that Harry couldn't deal with easily. After a bit of cat and mouse, he managed to corner Arturo and pelted his shield until it failed, and his wand was ripped from his hand.

"Stop!" Flitwick shouted surprisingly firmly.

He was so short and unobtrusive during the match that Harry had actually forgotten he was even there.

"Winner!" he yelled, pointing to Harry.



The crowd cheered with Dora and Sirius being the loudest as they whistled and stomped their feet.

“Let’s give it up to both of our finalists for that impressive performance,” the announcer said, walking over with a gold medal in his hands. “Witches and wizards, I give you your under-sixteen international dueling champion, Harry Potter!”

Bowing his head so the man could put the medal around his neck, Harry shook hands with Arturo and waved to the crowd, a grin on his face.