

Chapter X

When Sirius Met Luna

On the next Hogsmeade weekend, Remus, Sirius, Hermione, and Harry got together as planned. As Justin had dragon pox, Harry brought Luna with him. They went to the cave above Hogsmeade, where Remus and Harry cast some warming charms on the rocks.

Luna was happy to see Professor Lupin again and was very joyful to meet Sirius, until he managed to convince her that he was not Stubby Boardman. Sirius had no idea what to make of Luna, which amused Remus to no end. Harry had been unsurprised to learn that Luna knew about the Bern pamphlets, although she had only read two of them before Harry had loaned her the others.

As Sirius argued with Luna, Harry observed his godfather. Had he really been just 14-year-old Harry, he would have hugged Sirius immediately. This Harry was just barely able to contain his impulse.

Harry had convinced Remus to take Sirius to Grimmauld Place over the Yule holiday, and Dumbledore had cast the Fidelius. Not having to live rough this time around, Sirius was looking much healthier than Harry had ever seen him in the first time stream. Since Sirius was still a wanted man, but not being sought out by Death Eaters this time, he did go out, wearing glamors.

Finally, Luna seemed convinced. "Now, let me ask you something," Harry said to Sirius. "Did you and my dad think you were going to be on the Wizengamot before you were thirty?"

"No," Sirius said.

"Yes," Remus said.

"Well, that clears that up," Harry retorted.

"My great-great-grandfather was a Headmaster at Hogwarts," Sirius said, "and he was a general member of the Wizengamot. Hogwarts headmasters usually are members of some sort. His son managed to get elected to a noble seat. His older son, my grandfather, was too drunk to be electable, and the younger son, my mother's father, was just too damn mean."

"Pretty shallow gene pool there, Padfoot," Harry teased.

"Shut it," Sirius grumbled. "I heard all about that from Lily, and she was right. As for my father, he was too lazy, and his brother, much as I liked him, wasn't much better. My mother wasn't politically active, and was nearly as mean as her father. Her aunt was crueller than she was and her brother, well, let's just say Bellatrix was his favorite daughter. I knew what was expected of me if I wanted to get selected, and I was in no hurry to act 'respectable'."

"Now your father was different," Sirius went on.

"Potters have been on the Wizengamot far more often than they've been off," Remus agreed. "James was sure that, with his father's and Dumbledore's backing, he'd have a good chance of

becoming the public face of the opposition to Voldemort. Don't misunderstand, he loved your mother."

"But as far as James was concerned, her being Muggle-born was a bonus, a political statement," Sirius agreed. "It showed the bigots and the Death Eaters what James Potter, the Heir to Gryffindor, thought of the ideas of someone like Voldemort, who claimed to adore Slytherin."

"Your mother totally agreed," Remus said.

"And that was why he came after me?" Harry asked, deciding to ignore the fact that everyone had known he was the Heir of Gryffindor but had not bothered to tell him. Harry had rather thought it a family secret to some degree. "Not because I was I Half-Blood like him?"

"Who can say?" Remus said. "It might not have been clear to Voldemort exactly what his full motives were."

"True," Harry acknowledged. "Anyway, before we start talking about important things, Dobby!"

Dobby appeared and quickly set up a small feast. Harry and Hermione admired the spread and praised Dobby, who flushed and disappeared.

Once the meal got started, Harry spoke up. "Hermione and I have read the pamphlets. They read well, and really make internal sense."

"They certainly explain Grindelwald, and Voldemort to a lesser extent," Hermione agreed.

"Still, were they misused by Grindelwald, or are we missing something?" Harry asked.

"You read the pamphlets," Remus said. "Did you read The Wizarding Struggle and The Last Testament?"

Harry shook his head, while Hermione said, "No, and there's nothing about Bern in the general library collection or the restricted section. The books the library does have are in the faculty library under Ravenclaw Tower."

"Is that what Ravenclaw's Chamber is used for?" Luna asked. "People talked about it during my First year, but no one was sure exactly where it is under the Tower, how to get there, or if it was indeed Ravenclaw's version of the Chamber of Secrets."

"It's the entire sub-dungeon under the tower," Harry said. He looked at Sirius and Remus.

"The Wizarding Struggle, which came out in the early 1830s, sums up the ideas in all the pamphlets, but while it doesn't advocate the racism of the Pure-Blood position, it does more than mention that 'blood-traitors' might have to be destroyed," Remus said.

"And 'blood-traitors' are?" Harry asked.

"Those who think Muggle culture superior to Magical, who want to bring in as much Muggle technology as possible which could make it as dependent on the technology as the Muggles, and those who marry Muggles," Sirius said. "In a sense, we've already lost the second battle. We're totally dependent on the Muggle world. We get all our food, all the cloth for our clothes, a fair amount of the clothes themselves from Muggles. Everything about butterbeer except the final

brewing step is Muggle -- the ingredients, the bottles and barrels, the capping machines." He shrugged.

"There was a huge scandal late this past summer," Remus said. "I doubt you lot heard about it."

"It didn't have anything to do with cauldron bottoms, did it?" Harry asked.

"How did you know?" Remus asked, amazed.

"Percy Weasley works in the Ministry, and was dealing with sub-standard cauldron bottoms," Hermione said.

"There should be a joke there somewhere," Sirius mused. Remus, Harry, and Hermione rolled their eyes. Luna seemed concerned that she couldn't think of a decent joke either.

"It was something about them being too thin?" Hermione suggested.

Remus continued, "Anyway, yes, there are sub-standard cauldrons being imported. The reason they weren't working was one of three reasons, and these cauldrons could have any of the three problems: far too thick, far too thin, and many just had too much variation in the thickness."

Too thick, they all knew, and the cauldron would retain the heat too well. Too thin, and the potion would get too hot too fast. In both cases, a good brewer could learn to compensate, but it could be a challenge, especially for the thinner ones. An irregular thickness meant that many problems could occur. Cauldrons had been standardized two hundred years before.

"The real scandal was revealed in mid-September," Remus went on. "Do you know why there were all these problems for the first time on such a large scale?"

"Because standard cauldrons have been produced by reliable Muggle machinery, not by wizards?" Luna guessed before Harry or Hermione could make the same guess.

"Exactly," Remus said.

"Love 'em or loathe 'em, we are dependent on Muggles," Sirius stated simply.

"Wouldn't we die out if there wasn't some intermarriage with Muggles?" Hermione asked.

"Actually, not necessarily," Sirius said. "It would take careful tracking of the bloodlines of Squibs, but it seems as the vast majority of Muggleborns have at least one magical great-grandparent on both sides, if not closer in their family background. Bern didn't oppose the magical marrying into families like that, and certainly was not against Pure-bloods marrying Muggle-born, just marrying pure Muggles."

"He claimed to have tracked a hundred and two relationships where he knew the magical partner had two magical parents, and where he was certain the other partner was not magical and had no magical ancestors back to their great-great grandparents," Remus said. "I don't know if he did or not. In any case, he claimed that only one out of every four children was magical, most often the first-born, while if the second partner seemed Muggle but had at least one magical great-grandparent, three out of five children were magical."

"He also claimed that if all eight great-grandparents were magic users, then nine out of twelve children would be magical even if the parents were Squibs," Remus went on. "And eleven out of twelve if they were magical. He said he didn't have enough examples for all the stages between the extremes to give numbers to."

"And that's how we get having all eight great-grandparents and after as human magic users as the definition of a Full-Blood," Sirius said. "Add two more generations, and there we have the so-called 'Pure-Blood'."

"Now The Last Testament is nastier, but some have claimed it wasn't all written by Bern. He died in the 1840s, and the book appeared a few years later, edited by a wizard in his late twenties who called himself Grindelwald," Remus told them. "It doesn't repudiate one thing in the other works, but it does claim that the Muggles were getting more dangerous."

"How?" Luna asked.

"The first pamphlets appeared in the 1790s," Hermione mused. "The last one we saw was written in the mid-1820s. Over the next twenty years, you have the steam locomotive becoming common, telegraphs, and a huge upswing in industry throughout western Germany." She looked at Remus. "I take it they were at least German?"

"Bern was from Lorraine, Grindelwald was from near the Austrian-Swiss border," Remus said. "Anyway, with the upswing in industry, he said that the Muggles would have to come to a violent political and economic collapse, and that if the wizards could give things a push in the right direction, well, the faster the collapse, the better everyone would be."

"Has anyone ever advocated something decent from these ideas?" Harry asked.

"As in?" Sirius demanded.

"As in trying to bring the different sentients together to keep us all protected from the expanding Muggle industrial complex," Harry suggested. "Treating the Muggle-born, the Squibs, the werewolves, those with giant and veela and whatever lines of blood as equals, because we're all in this little magical world together, and it's getting smaller by the year?"

"No," Sirius said. "Grindelwald preempted any other interpretations."

"What are your concerns, Harry?" Remus asked.

"I think Hermione and I know, better than most people in our world, exactly how dangerous it would be for our world to be exposed to the Muggle world," Harry said. "The only way for us to survive and prosper would seem to be to work together, not split hairs about who counts as being more magical or more worthy."

"What the Pure-Blood agenda would do would actually make us weaker," Hermione said. "The wizarding world is getting stagnant. You either grow or die out. We love being magical," Hermione said, her chin quivering a bit from the emotion, "and we'd hate seeing it die out."

"The magical world is getting more and more eccentric, or at least wizarding Europe is," Harry went on. "There's no reason why we can't pass as Muggles when we pass through their world. Most Pure-Bloods are just too lazy to bother doing it right."

"Like Archie," Hermione agreed, and she told the story of the wizard at the World Cup who 'liked a breeze around his privates'.

"And what is it you'd like to do?" Sirius asked.

"Several things," Harry said. "One, full rights for werewolves and part-humans who can do wizarding magic."

"Two, better, less condescending relations with other magical sentient, including ending House Elf slavery, along the lines of the elf regulations in North America and Australia," Hermione stated firmly.

"Three, integrating the magical community here in Britain and Ireland," Harry said. "The best estimate for our population is 27 to 30,000, right?"

Everyone nodded.

"Even given the longer life-times of wizards, that still should mean there are at least two hundred to two hundred and fifty magic users born every year," Harry said. Again, everyone nodded.

"The current student population of Hogwarts is three-hundred and twelve," Harry said. "Our year is the smallest, with just forty-two. Where are the other twelve-hundred to fifteen-hundred children? There is the Tara Academy in Ireland, with less than a hundred students. There's the Ysgol in Wales, where all the instruction is in Welsh, but that's less than a hundred and fifty students. I'm sure a few go to continental schools, but not more than a few dozen. Every year, the Examiners test between twenty and twenty-five students who were privately tutored for their O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s. We're still missing a thousand or more children." Harry turned to Sirius. "Tell us."

"They're there, hidden away in valley and glens, in the middle of fens, moors, and peat bogs," Sirius said. "They're very poor, and very proud. They're educated at home or with their neighbors, and what little money they somehow scrape together goes to replace things like the family wands or to buy cloth or cauldrons that they can't really make themselves. Their lifestyles are still pretty medieval, and many still plow the land to make their living, usually growing magical plants to sell and trade and vegetable gardens for themselves. Many are pretty inbred, but a few integrate into the general magical population. Probably the most well-known example is the Weasleys. They are famous for large families and red hair. Arthur's grandfather shocked the family when he left the clan enclave in Dartmoor and moved to Diagon Alley, worked hard, married out of the clan, and sent his sons to Hogwarts, the first to attend in some five hundred years. Two sons went back to the clan, two died in the first war of Grindelwald, one supposedly died after seeing a grim right after he left Hogwarts. The other, the youngest, was Arthur's father. The grandfather died of over-work, trying to send six boys to Hogwarts. Arthur's father worked for over thirty years paying off the debts, and only then did he marry. He only had three sons, and his wife and two of the boys were killed in one of the last rocket attacks on London in 1945."

Harry knew all that of course, and that Molly, two years younger than Arthur, had defied her family and married him right out of school. They had still had to wait several years before starting the big family both dreamed of because of financial pressures. Harry knew that the Gaunt family was a small-scale version of the Weasley clan, and that Stan Shunpike was the first in his family to have entered the mainstream magical world in centuries.

"So, we need to bring them back into the magical world," Harry said firmly. "Hogwarts was designed to hold up to a thousand students. The Ministry claims some jurisdiction over Hogwarts. They either need to end the claim or start extending money for scholarships."

"That wouldn't be enough," Remus said.

"No, it wouldn't," Hermione agreed, and she looked at Harry with loving adoration.

"What do you have planned?" Remus asked.

"It turns out that I own a large unplottable tract of land in Wales," Harry said.

"Vale Gryffindor," Sirius agreed. "James and I visited there once. It's very pretty. The castle is in good shape. . . ." Sirius' jaw dropped.

"You're going to build a school?" Remus demanded.

"Well, the main building is already built," Harry said. "It can be used for most things, except for the dormitories and greenhouses. For the dormitories, we'll build a series of lodges. There'll be a sliding scale of payments for students. To avoid people screaming about us undermining Hogwarts or the other schools, we'll only offer First through Fifth year courses, but with the proviso that the Examiners do our students' O.W.L.s just like the other schools, and those students who get at least three E O.W.L.s may attend one of the other three schools for their N.E.W.T. courses on the same sliding scale. We'll also need access to the Great Book that records the names of all magical births, but since Hogwarts shares that with Tara and the Ysgol, that shouldn't be a problem."

"Although most of the teachers at Hogwarts are very good, they have to teach too much," Hermione said. "We actually spend very little time in the classroom and learn mostly from homework. The student-teacher ratio at the British School of Magics will be half Hogwarts'. We'll have all the same courses, but also have mandatory Muggle Studies, taught properly, as in how to blend in to the Muggle world as well as the out-of-date nonsense they teach at Hogwarts, so they can get the O.W.L."

"The . . . the Muggle material is 'out-of-date' nonsense?" Luna asked, shocked.

"Afraid so," Hermione said sympathetically.

"And the money to pay for all this?" Remus asked.

"I can afford the salaries and the food easily," Harry said. "I'd give half my fortune as a foundation. That will still leave my children disgustingly wealthy. I had Dobby put out the word that so-called 'disgraced elves' would be welcome there. We already have a dozen elves from all over Europe who were so abused by their masters that they kicked them out for being too injured and deformed to want to have around. They can still do magic, and love the idea of the BSM." When Sirius opened his mouth, Harry cut him off, saying, "Yes, I know all the jokes and bad puns you were about to make. Believe me, the other names we came up with were worse. When the school opens in 2000, we should only be really missing one thing."

"And what's that?" Sirius asked.

"A proper student library," Remus said.

Hermione nodded. "Harry has more than enough books for a really good start on a staff library and our own restricted section. What we might not have is a proper student library."

"We'll appeal for donations, but that won't be enough," Harry said.

"Remus and I will cull through the library at Grimmauld Place," Sirius said. "Anything we personally don't want I'll donate. That will increase your restricted section, if nothing else."

"Oh, Professor Lupin," Hermione added, "may we hire you as a consultant? We have a long list of questions and projects for you to work on if you'll take the job."

Remus looked at Harry, who grinned and nodded. "I'd be honored."

"We need to write up a manifesto or something before the end of the Tournament," Harry said. "We were asking about Bern because we want to wrap all our ideas up into this one package. We can use Bern's ideas to justify what we're doing, and by doing so we'll be using a theoretical basis the magical establishment is used to seeing, even if it's a novel approach. We needed to know if it is so discredited in people's eyes that it would do more harm than good."

"I'd actually say no to that," Sirius mused. "They'll yell about your interpretation, but they'll be so stunned by the idea of a new school that it might actually cushion the shock to use Bern a lot."

"A school where werewolves and half-giants and half-veela will be welcome, if they have the magic, as well as the magical-but-poor," Hermione said. "Plus any of the Muggle-born who prefer to go there."

"You're still short on the money front," Sirius said.

"We are," Harry agreed, "in the sense that our students would still need supplies, uniforms, books, and a proper wand."

"I might be able to help with the wands," Luna said.

"How is that?" Hermione asked, suspecting Harry probably already knew the answer.

"My great-uncle Ollie has said he might apprentice me," Luna said. "My mother was an Ollivander. He told me once that his store has over ten thousand wands made by him and his family, and over two thousand wands from around the world that meet his specifications. In addition, though, he has thousands of other wands, which aren't defective but which don't quite meet the craft standards. He might be willing to part with those at a low price. I could at least write and ask."

"We can write him," Harry said. "We'll also be lacking a lot of depth. Anything beyond the minimal equipment or stock of potion ingredients or potions for the Infirmary, for example."

"And you won't be lacking teachers?" Sirius asked.

"Probably not," Harry said. "Snape, Trelawney, and Sinistra are the only Hogwarts teachers under fifty. Even if we don't add in Binns or Dumbledore, the average age of the teaching staff is about seventy-five. Now that might be solid middle-age for the magical, but I bet we can find younger people who are well-qualified who would jump at the chance." Harry winked at Sirius. "Who knows, you two might end up as the elders of the school, teaching Transfiguration and either Defense or Creatures."

"Ha bloody ha," Sirius retorted, knowing full well that he was already hooked, should he be pardoned.

The three students took their leave soon thereafter, intending on making the Three Broomsticks in time to have a mug of warm butterbeer before making the trek back to the castle.

"He thinks big, doesn't he?" Remus asked.

"He does," Sirius admitted. "Bigger than James, and with more practicality than Lily." He looked at Remus. "Why do you think the Lovegood girl was here? Just for the reasons he showed? To make certain we can't ask him about Voldemort or the alternate future? Or because he's intending on having two wives, in the old-style?"

"I wouldn't want to guess, but I think he just values her outlook."

"Too bad. She has nice legs for her age."