

## Owl Post

June 15th 1996

Dear ~~Pr Mr.~~ Lu Remus,

You said you wanted to hear from me every three days and Hedwig was getting restless anyhow, stuck in her cage, so I threatened Uncle Vernon and he let me let her out, so I can send this letter to you, because you told me to keep in touch.

I'm fine.

Harry

\*\*\*

18 June 1996  
12 Grimmauld Place

To: Harry Potter  
4 Privet Drive  
Little Whingeing

Dear Harry,

I'm glad to hear you're faring well. As I'm sure you've guessed, we knew that anyway, but it's heartening to have it from your own hand. If for some reason the Dursleys do stop allowing you to send letters, you've only to make a signal to Arabella Figg. Someone's always on watch.

Sorry about that.

At any rate it gives you some leverage against the Dursleys. We'll get you out of there as soon as we can.

Remus

PS: Are you getting the Prophet? The Harpies thrashed the Cannons.

\*\*\*

June 20 June 1996  
4 Privet Drive  
To: Remus Lupin  
12 Grimmauld Place  
London

Dear Remus,

How long exactly is soon? I'm not getting the Prophet since Dudley caught one of the owls and almost stuffed her into the microwave. I had to pay for the full year, too, but the delivery owls won't come near the house anymore. How's Ron holding up about the game?

Still fine.

Harry

\*\*\*

22 June 1996  
12 Grimmauld Place

Dear Harry,

I haven't spoken to Ron; his mum felt it was best to keep him away from here until you showed up. She doesn't come to the meetings anymore but Arthur keeps her up-to-date. Shame too. I miss her eeking. Is he a Cannons fan? I imagine he's not too broken up if he is; he'd be used to it,

wouldn't he.

I'll keep an eye out for interesting articles to send to you. Dudley doesn't try anything with Hedwig, does he?

I'm afraid only Dumbledore knows "how soon is soon", but I did some figuring and I would imagine the earliest we could come and fetch you would be -- well, your birthday, actually.

Good to know you're keeping your chin up (and hopefully your head down?)

Remus

\*\*\*

24 June 1996  
4 Privet Drive  
Dear Remus,

You should see Ron's bedroom; he's a Cannons fanatic. Orange everywhere. I think if you gave him a choice between his attic with the ghoul and the Cannons, and a whole mansion with no wizarding wireless for the games, he'd probably pick the ghoul. It's a nice bedroom, anyhow. Mine's full of Dudley's old broken things.

Thanks for the clipping about the Weird Sisters and the sports page.

Things are pretty much the same here. Nothing ever changes with the Dursleys. Or if it does it's usually my fault.

I've marked off the days until my birthday on the calendar.

Harry

\*\*\*

25 June 1996  
12 Grimmauld Place

Dear Harry,

I had no idea Ron was such a fanatic. I knew he liked Quidditch, but you have to be a bit of a nutter for the game to root for the Cannons. Do you have a team? I was always fond of the Finches when I was in school.

Are you being allowed to look at your books and do your summer home-work and such? That ought to distract you at least a little. It did seem like a very dull house when we visited. Though your aunt's housekeeping can't be faulted, exactly, Tonks asks me to add that it's a bit scary how clean that kitchen was. She's off to a concert this evening, some very loud and not very harmonious group called The Trolls is playing nearby. I offered to go with her as I really don't think she ought to be going such places alone, but she laughed at me and said she'd be fine.

Remus

PS: Harry, I don't mean to sound discouraging, but the fact that we could come fetch you on your birthday doesn't mean we will. I don't control these things. I'll try to have a word with Dumbledore about it.

\*\*\*

27 June 1996  
4 Privet Drive

To: Remus Lupin  
12 Grimmauld Place  
London

Remus,

Fine. Let me know when you will come to get me.

Harry

\*\*\*

Harry,

Please don't be angry. If we could come get you now, we would. You know that. This is for your own protection. I've told you before and if you

continue to act like a foolish child I'll tell you again -- your parents didn't give their lives so you could throw yours away before it's even properly started. They don't deserve your petulance and I don't either, considering that I lost them too.

I found this and thought of you. Consider it an apology. That's Sirius and James on Hallowe'en our last year at Hogwarts, dressed up like Castor and Pollux. Your mum went as Athena -- charmed her eyes a different colour and all.

Remus

\*\*\*

2 July 1996  
4 Privet Drive

Remus,

Thanks for the photograph. Do you have one of mum?

Tell Tonks I hope she had fun at the Trolls concert and I'm laughing at you too.

I don't have a team really. I guess the Kestrels since they had some great players for Britain in the Cup last time. How can you like the *Finches*? They're American.

Uncle Vernon tried to lock up my school trunk but I got him to give me my books eventually. As for Aunt Petunia's housekeeping, I don't guess she'd be quite so good at it without someone to boss around and make do the mucky jobs.

Harry

\*\*\*

6 July 1996  
12 Grimmauld Place

Harry,

Very funny. It was a chivalrous gesture, you know.

Anyway, what exactly did you threaten your uncle with to get him to cough up your books? He does know you can't do magic over the holidays, doesn't he?

You must admit that liking the Finches does have a unique quality to it, and they were quite good when I was young, though they're not much now -- the European teams snap up any decent American players and they're only too glad to go, given how unpopular the sport is there. They were the first team I ever saw play -- when I was a boy my father took me to America ~~to see about my~~ on a holiday and we went to a game together. I haven't been back since, but I've always wanted to go. I've seen them play a few exhibition games against English teams over the years, but they don't get out this way very often.

When you come, remind me and I'll tell you about Sirius and I sneaking into a game when we were nineteen.

The Cannons got pounded again, I'm afraid -- I've included the clipping. I asked Arthur how Ron was taking it and he seemed surprised that I knew Ron was a fan. So you're earning me credit with the Weasleys at any rate.

Remus

PS: Haven't found one of your mum yet. Still looking.

\*\*\*

9 July 1996

Remus,

Why can't you tell me in writing? About you and Sirius sneaking into the game, I mean.

I think Ron likes rooting for the losing team. It's more interesting that way. If your team always wins then you're never really afraid you're going to lose, and who wants that? I'm glad I don't have to watch the Gryffindor-Slytherin matches I guess, since I don't really enjoy all that suspense and all. Especially if I couldn't help out. I couldn't just sit there and watch and not do anything to help the team win.

Is America very interesting? Uncle Vernon goes there on business every few years and he loves it, which always made me think I'd probably hate it. I guess he doesn't get to see the whole country though, so maybe there are some nice bits. I'd rather not say what I told him to get him to give me his books. I'm not very proud of it.

Harry

\*\*\*

11 July 1996

Harry,

Well, I suppose I could write to you about it, but then what would you have to look forward to? If you want me to tell you about it, I will. I just thought it would be a nice treat when you got here.

Your father was precisely the same way. He never could sit on the sidelines in anything -- Quidditch, school, life. I know it's hard to wait, Harry, but you'll be here soon enough. Everyone misses you here. Tonks says to say hello, and Moody asks if you're taking all the proper precautions. Kingsley says he saw you weeding the garden for your aunt when he was on watch (we call it Harry Duty) the other day and he says he hopes you're staying hydrated in this weather. I don't know why they all come talk to me, they could just write you themselves, but I guess I've been designated Order Spokesman.

Molly's taken to coming to meetings again -- I think she felt bad about Sirius for a while, but ~~we all~~ grieve with so many of the Weasleys involved, she at least wants to be around to tell them how dangerous everything is. She says she'll cook you anything you like for dinner when you come home.

I liked America a lot, but I was a child -- I liked anything shiny or colourful. We worked our way from Salem down through Boston and New York and eventually ended up in Pennsylvania. I didn't like New York much, but I'm not one for crowds. Pennsylvania was beautiful.

After you leave Hogwarts you should take a Grand Tour like they used to -- have a look at Europe and America and see a bit of Egypt if you can. I've always wanted to see the pyramids in person. There's something terribly important about seeing and touching things like that, to make sure they're real.

And now I'd very much like to know what you told your uncle, young man.

Remus

PS: Please ask Molly to make chicken and new potatoes. You won't be sorry.

\*\*\*

13 July 1996

Remus,

Well....

I told him I knew a werewolf. I didn't say it was you, I just said I knew one and so he'd better watch his step. Not that he does, much, but at least they haven't locked up my things or locked me in my room and I'm allowed to eat at the table and everything. Speaking of, tell Mrs. Weasley that I'd like chicken and new potatoes and whatever else you want. Everything she makes is good, especially compared to Aunt Petunia's cooking. They won't let me cook anymore since they found my Potions textbook.

Also please tell Kingsley Shacklebolt that I'm looking after myself. I'd say he could write to me himself especially since I have all kinds of questions about becoming an Auror and what that school is like and such, but he's sort of scary.

I guess I'd like to see America and everything. I never really thought about what I'd do after school until we had to do our OWLs. ~~Voldemort is still~~ everything isn't settled by the time I leave school, will I still have to stay with the Dursleys? I'll be a full wizard, so I shouldn't, right? And Dumbledore can't make me, can he?

Do you know if the Aurors have a Quidditch team?

Harry

\*\*\*

15 July 1996

Harry,

Finally, someone finds a valid use for lycanthropy. Not that I'm terrifically pleased over your using me as a bedtime story to frighten Muggles, but at least you're benefiting from it. Letting you eat at the table? Didn't they used to?

I agree with you that Kingsley can be rather imposing at times. He's so very...bald. And he looks as though he could snap a skinny chap like you or me in half, doesn't he? Still, I'm sure he'd be happy to answer your questions, Harry, or you could always write to Tonks. I don't think they have a

regular Quidditch seven, but I'm sure they have a team that plays for charities and such, like the Muggle firemens' league.

When you turn seventeen the protection the Dursleys provide will be lifted at any rate, so yes -- you won't be required to live with them after you reach your majority. I suppose next summer we'll have to fetch you by your birthday. That is, if everything isn't cleared up by then, which it might very well be, you know, despite everything Dumbledore says.

Molly was terribly pleased to hear how much you like her cooking.

Remus

PS: Remember the photo of Lily I mentioned? We've found it! Or rather Arthur did, in one of Sirius' old books. It's been badly folded though, and ripped because of it, so I've sent it off to be repaired.

\*\*\*

18 July 1996

Remus,

I hope it's fixable. Was it very badly damaged? I've been through my whole photo album that Hagrid gave me and I can't find any Hallowe'en pictures at all. What did you go as?

Maybe Tonks and I could talk when I get there. Less than two weeks to go, right? I've kept perfectly calm this summer and haven't had any magical incidents or anything. I'll be glad to leave for good next year and they can go back to pretending my mum and dad never existed. I reckon they'll have to make Dudley weed the garden and wash the car and do all the boring chores then, except he's too stupid to do them right anyway.

I've been doing my summer reading because there's NOTHING ELSE to do unless I want to mooch around downstairs and have Aunt Petunia give me chores, and I was wondering if you knew about tinctures at all. I'm supposed to be in advanced Potions if I did well on my OWLs, and that means we've got to learn how all this stuff is made. What's the difference between a tincture and an infusion? It's all down to copper tubing, it looks like to me. Plus I'm supposed to practice it and how am I supposed to do that if Aunt Petunia won't let me near the stove? I can hardly make tea without her asking what's in it. Like I know the exact ingredients in tea. It's tea! It's got leaves and things!

No wonder so many witches and wizards hate Muggles. There are a lot of dumb Muggles around.

Harry

\*\*\*

19 July 1996

Harry,

Well, I suppose there are a lot of stupid Muggles in the world, but it's not as though magical folk have the corner on intelligence. I won't name names, but I'm sure you know who I'm speaking of, since they're in your year and I remember having to mark their abysmal papers when I taught Defence.

I think it's all down to copper tubing in the end, with regards to Potions, but I believe the difference is in the way the herbs are treated. We'll look it up when you get here; until then just bide a while and tell your aunt that your tea has Vervain and Feverfew in it, which I always thought were the most frightening-sounding herbs (they're mostly harmless, but if you don't know that by now then you don't deserve the Herbology marks you've been getting). It's very doubtful that your tea has anything other than good old Indian tea leaves in it, but she doesn't need to know that.

Speaking of marks, the OWL scores have come out. Hermione's done well, so her parents informed me when we spoke by telephone, and Ron's gotten enough to scrape into the classes he needs to become an Auror -- though to hear Molly talk, he hung the moon and lit it, too.

I haven't opened yours. Find enclosed. Do tell me, however, as Dumbledore's lips are sealed on the matter and we're all terrifically anxious to know. Tonks especially wants to know your Potions scores -- I won't go into detail, but a Feud has arisen between her and our Potions Master and she'd dearly like to rub his nose in your success.

Remus

\*\*\*

23 July, 1996

Dear Harry,

Are you all right? You haven't written.

Remus

\*\*\*

23 July, 1996

Remus,

Sorry it took so long to write back. I couldn't open my scores for two days, I was so nervous.

I did all right. Not as great as Hermione I'm sure, but probably better than Ron. I did get an Outstanding in Potions, tell Tonks. I'll get into all the classes I need, and could take a few I didn't, if I wanted. There's a note on my Defence score that says it's one of the highest they've ever given, which I guess is mostly your fault, so you can rub that in at Snape too.

After all the waiting I guess it was a bit of a letdown. Not that I expected I'd beat out Hermione or anything, but it seems silly now to have been so scared of it.

What's happened between Tonks and Professor Snape? Please tell me. It's so boring here and I miss our world.

Harry

\*\*\*

24 July 1996

Remus,

Got your second note. Sending this back with the second owl you sent so that he feels useful and the Dursleys don't yell at me.

Harry

\*\*\*

July 26th

Wotcher Harry,

Remus said before he left that I should send you a letter. He's gone off on a mission and doesn't know when he'll be back but he ought to be by the 29th or so, as there's full moon on the thirtieth. He says in the meantime you can write to me or to Moody and let us know you're all right. He says the Cannons are going to be last place in the league if this keeps up. He says to tell you that Athena is all patched up and that the answer to your earlier question regarding same is "Hephaestus", whatever that means.

How are the Muggles?

Tonks

\*\*\*

27th July 1996

Dear Tonks,

He went off on a mission right before the full moon?

Thanks for the note. I'll keep writing to him if that's okay and he can read them when he gets back and he's recovering. The Muggles are awful as usual.

Harry

\*\*\*

July 30th

Dear Harry,

Remus came back this afternoon. Thought you'd like to know. He looks ruddy awful.

Tonks

\*\*\*

Dear Mrs Dursley,

I was wondering if I might borrow Harry for this afternoon. I see him working in yer garden and think he would like to pull some wyds in mine.

Arabella Figg

\*\*\*

31st July 1996

To: Vernon Dursley and family  
4 Privet Drive  
Little Whingeing

Mr Dursley,

By the time you receive this letter, you will perhaps be wondering where your nephew has vanished to. We have come to take him for the rest of the summer and, finding him at Mrs Figg's home, have simply collected him from there. You will not be troubled with him again until next June.

If you will please allow the bearer of this letter to collect his personal effects, there will be no need for any hexing to occur. I am sure you will find Mr Shackbolt an extremely polite and efficient man. I must warn you however that if you impede his progress in any way, I am not answerable for his actions.

Sincerely,  
RJ Lupin  
(The werewolf.)

\*\*\*

Harry was met at the door of 12 Grimmauld Place by Molly Weasley and a large chocolate cake; he didn't know if Remus had planned this or not, but it was the best birthday present he possibly could have received. Kingsley arrived with his trunk before long -- when Aunt Petunia had mentioned he was to go do yardwork at Mrs Figg's, he knew they were coming to bring him home and had packed in anticipation of it. "We couldn't risk telling you when we were going to come fetch you," Molly explained, as cake was thrust upon Harry in the dining room. The others were all eating as well, making low small talk while Harry enjoyed his first ever birthday party, as small as it was.

"That's all right," Harry said, around a mouthful of frosting.

"You certainly seemed ready enough to go," Tonks added, grinning and touseling his hair. "Lupin was furious he couldn't come along and help. I think he wanted to go get your things from the Dursleys personally."

"Is he here?" Harry asked eagerly. Molly and Tonks exchanged a look.

"Well, yes," Molly said. "He's sleeping. It's the day after for him, you know."

"Yeah, he told me in one of his letters. Can I see him?"

"I don't know, Harry -- "

"I won't wake him up," Harry protested. "I just want to see how he is."

Molly sighed. "All right, but that's all -- no noisemaking, and absolutely no rows, do you hear me?"

"Wasn't going to make a row," Harry muttered. Tonks took his arm and led him up the stairs towards the bedrooms.

"I'll leave you here," she said, as they halted in front of the room Harry recognised as Remus'. "Don't be long, all right?"

Harry nodded, and waited until she was all the way downstairs before he knocked softly. When there was no answer, he pushed the door open, wincing when its hinges squeaked.

There was a bed and a desk, and walls lined with bookshelves. A shadowy lump on the bed turned out to be Remus, curled up in a ball, his face less anxious than usual, in sleep. Harry glanced at the desk and saw an envelope there marked "Harry"; he picked it up and opened the flap, taking out a sheet of parchment and a photograph.

That was his mother, smiling and waving in faded colour, showing off a neatly-pinned bedsheet and a fancy helmet with spikes on it. Every so often the edge of a dark-haired head would appear in one corner or the other and she would shove it back out of the picture frame, laughing. Harry could see where someone had -- expertly but still visibly -- charmed out a crease and fixed a fairly serious rip.

\*\*\*

July 31st (by the time you get it) 1996

Dear Harry,

Welcome back. Sorry I couldn't be there for the party but it upsets people when I wander around looking like the survivor of a particularly nasty 'flu, and I tend to fall asleep a lot anyway. I hope you enjoyed the dinner and your cake.

OWLs are always nervewracking, especially afterwards, but at least you summoned your courage and did it -- Dumbledore's been in communication with Neville Longbottom and says the poor lad hid his from his gran for almost a week because he wanted to open it on his own time, and she'd have made him do it immediately.

An Outstanding in Potions and in Defence is nothing to sneeze at, Harry! I'm as proud of you as I have any right to be and even Severus, underneath his muttering about biased instructors, seemed rather pleased. It may not seem like much to you, but you spend too much time with Hermione -- I don't think you realise how clever all three of you are. I'd like to see your scores when I'm up and about again.

I'll tell you about Tonks and Snape in a bit, but for Merlin's sake don't mention the library to either of them, unless you're so extremely bored that you'd like to see a great flaming row.

Happy birthday, Harry. Welcome home.

Remus

\*\*\*

Harry grinned and folded the letter up, carefully wrapping the photograph in it for safekeeping. He could paste it into his album with the rest of the photos tonight...

There was a raspy noise, and Harry started; when he turned, Remus was watching him from the pillow, face pale, eyes sharp as ever.

"Not much of a present," he said hoarsely.

"I don't care. It's what I wanted," Harry answered. "Mrs. Weasley'll kill me if she finds out I woke you up."

"You didn't. I was just resting while I waited."

Harry looked down at the picture again. "Thanks," he said, unsure what else he could say.

"You're welcome," Remus said. "I'd sit up to say hello properly, but -- "

"Why did you go as Hephaestus?" Harry asked suddenly. Remus smiled, or tried to smile, and closed his eyes.

"Hephaestus was the wise-arse gimp who never got the girl," he answered. "Go on then. Come by tomorrow; I'll be better then."

Harry nodded and turned to leave, walking slowly to the door until he heard Remus' breathing even out.

"Remus," he said at the doorway.

"Mmh?"

"Can I still write to you?"

Silence.

"It's just that I liked it," he continued hopefully.

"Sure," Remus mumbled sleepily. "I did too."

END